"THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AMONGST SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS : WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ITS NATURE, EXTENT, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES."

By LOUISE KRETZSCHMAR

Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town, August, 1992.

ABSTRACT.

In this thesis, privatization means the restriction of the Christian Gospel to the private, spiritual concerns of the individual. A privatised Gospel is a dualistic, individualistic, spiritualised, and a-contextual distortion of the Christian faith. It either deliberately avoids the public sphere or responds to it in an uncritical and ineffective manner, thus, it is vulnerable to manipulation by group interests.

The term the "South African Baptists" includes the 19th century pioneers who formed the Baptist Union (BU) in 1877 and those Baptists who have since been either full members of the BU or Associations of it. It also includes those groups who have since broken away from the BU such as the Transkei Baptist Union and the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa. For reasons of space, this thesis concentrates on the white and African components of the South African Baptists.

Chapter one provides an explanation of what is meant by privatization and who the South African Baptists are. Chapter two outlines and defends the sociological, historical and theological methodologies employed in the thesis. Chapter three elucidates the Reformation roots of the Baptist tradition and, in particular, the importance of the influence of the Anabaptist tradition. Chapter four shows that only certain of the more privatised English Baptist traditions have been stressed by South African Baptist writers, whilst the important elements of social involvement and radicalism have been ignored or neglected. The fifth chapter of the thesis argues that the 19th century South African Baptists perpetuated a Euro-centric and privatised form of the Christian faith and conformed to colonialism. Chapter six deals with the period between 1892-1977 and shows that despite their verbal censure of the government, the BU propagated segregation and white domination within its own structures. Chapter seven, reveals that whilst many within the BU have exhibited reactionary or reformist approaches, the Fellowship of Concerned Baptists and the Baptist Convention, in particular, have resisted the privatised theological praxis that has dominated the BU for so long. Chapter eight, finally, proposes that the Baptists learn from their past and develop a more holistic theological praxis.

****

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.

The writing of this thesis has been a complex and rigorous academic exercise. But because I myself am a Baptist, this study has also involved something of a personal journey. For many years I have been concerned about the apparent unwillingness, or inability, of many Baptists (especially those within the Baptist Union) to address their faith to the burning cultural, socio-economic, and political issues of contemporary South Africa. The subject of this thesis was, in a sense, born out of my desire to investigate the nature, origins and determining features of South African Baptist social ethics. This has led me to attempt to re-interpret the rich Baptist heritage in relation to the context within which modern Baptists in South Africa find themselves. Therefore, this study differs from the traditional Baptist histories in that it seeks to do more than "tell the story". Although the thesis does, indeed, include historical narrative, it seeks to analyse the South African Baptists' story within the varying social contexts that have directly influenced Baptist theological praxis. It is my sincere hope that this thesis will play some small role in helping Baptists who experience the same disquiet and frustration that I do, to develop a new and vibrant vision of their Christian faith.

A great many people have assisted me over the past four and a half years. My supervisor, Professor Charles Villa-Vicencio has been a markedly sympathetic, conscientious and competent guide though the historical, theological, and sociological labyrinth I so precipitately entered. I have learnt a great deal from him and appreciate his dedication as a teacher. My colleague at UNISA, Dr Greg Cuthbertson, prevented me from perpetrating a great many historical follies. The responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies that may remain can, however, not be laid at their door. To several South African Baptists, and to Rev Sydney Hudson-Reed in particular, I owe a great debt. Their writings provided me with much that was informative and helpful, and I trust that they will not be offended by the fact that I came to rather different conclusions. I would also like to bear testimony to the influence that the life and writings of the late Professor David Bosch had on my own theological and personal development.

In addition to my academic colleagues, my long-suffering friends and family members have both endured my single-mindedness and helped in me in a host of ways, including providing food and sympathy, preparing the bibliography, proof-reading, typing, photostatting, etc. To my mother,

Rhoda, my sister, June, and Margie, all three of whom stood by me from the outset of the thesis, to Una, Zani, Reneé, Judy, Brenda and, particularly to Philip, who assisted me with the final revisions, my heart-felt thanks.

The members of the UNISA library have also been most helpful. In particular, Monica Strassner assisted me to obtain many books and references and Audrey Williams inspired me to be far more consistent in the preparation of my bibliography than would otherwise have been the case.

The financial assistance of the Institute for Research Development towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed in this work, or conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not to be attributed to the Institute for Science Development.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

A. Journal Abbreviations :

(These journal titles have been abbreviated because they occur regularly in the footnotes and the Bibliography).

Amer Bapt Q	American Baptist Quarterly
Bapt H & H	Baptist History and Heritage
Bapt Q	Baptist Quarterly
JTSA	Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
Miss	Missionalia
MQR	Mennonite Quarterly Review
Pro V	Pro Veritate
Rev Exp	Review and Expositor

B. Other Abbreviations :

ABK	Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk
AICs	African Independent/Indigenous Churches
ANC	African National Congress
BASA	Baptist Association of South Africa (previously the IBM - Indian Baptist Mission)
BBC	Bantu Baptist Church (later the Bantu Baptist Convention, still later the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa)
BBI	Baptist Bible Institute (now BITS - Baptist International Theological Seminary)
BITS	Baptist International Theological Seminary (previously the BBI)
BMD	Baptist Mission Department (previously the SABMS)
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society (British)
BU	Baptist Union of Southern Africa (some writers use the abbreviation BUSA).
BWA	In this thesis the South African Baptist Women's Association (BWA is also used in other literature to refer to the Baptist World Alliance)

CCSA	Christian Council of South Africa
CE	Concerned Evangelicals
CI	Christian Institute
Convention	The Baptist Convention of Southern Africa
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
ECC	End Conscription Campaign
EWISA	Evangelical Witness in South African
IBM	Indian Baptist Mission
ICT	Institute of Contextual Theology
NBC	National Baptist Convention (in the USA)
NIBA	Natal Indian Baptist Association
PAC	Pan African Congress
PCR	Programme to Combat Racism
SABH	South African Baptist Handbook (a BU publication)
SABMS	South African Baptist Missionary Society
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force
SASO	South African Student's Organisation
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention (in the USA)
SPROCAS	Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society
TBU	Transkei Baptist Union
UCM	University Christian Movement
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNISA	University of South Africa
WCC	World Council of Churches

****

INTRODUCTION.

The term "privatization" is often used in South Africa today but, like so many other words, its meaning is dependent on the context in which it is used. In an economic sense, privatization refers to the transfer of economic assets or operations from State to "private" control. In this thesis, privatization means the limitation of the Christian Gospel to the private, spiritual concerns of the individual.

A privatised Gospel is inherently dualistic, individualistic and vulnerable to manipulation by group interests. It dilutes the meaning of the Gospel and it restricts the application of the very concepts it claims to enshrine, namely, salvation, spirituality and the mission of the Church. In short, a privatised Gospel either deliberately avoids the public sphere or responds to it in an uncritical or ineffective manner. A privatised Gospel both fails to bring about holistic spiritual renewal in the lives of individual believers and it is unable to promote either ecclesiastical or social transformation.

The phrase "the South African Baptists" is used in this thesis to refer to the churches established by the early Baptist pioneers in South Africa, which subsequently formed themselves into the South African Baptist Union in 1877. It also includes those groups (eg the Indian and African Baptists) who were "in association" with the Baptist Union, as well as those Baptists who broke away from the Union in 1986 to form the independent Baptist Convention of Southern Africa. For reasons of space, particular emphasis is given in this thesis to the largely white (Baptist Union) and African (Baptist Convention) components of the South African Baptist group.

This thesis is <u>not</u> a circumscribed study of a particular person, period or doctrine; it stretches over a large historical and theological canvas. But, though it deals with an extended period, from the Reformation to the present day, it is not a purely historical analysis. Rather, it is concerned with the emergence of a privatised theology within the Baptist tradition. Although the thesis, of necessity, includes information about the Anabaptists and the English American and German Baptists, it is not concerned with these groups <u>per se</u>, but only with the influence that these groups have had, directly or indirectly, on the South African Baptists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Therefore, the Baptist tradition as a whole is discussed only to elucidate the manner in which South African Baptists have interpreted their theological heritage. In the earlier chapters, some examples of the privatised nature of the South African Baptist tradition are provided, but

the bulk of the evidence for this dilution and distortion of the Gospel is presented in chapters five to seven.

In short, then, the aims of this thesis are to provide evidence to indicate the nature and extent to which South African Baptists (either actively or by default) espouse and practice a privatised form of the Christian faith. Secondly, to uncover the causes and historical development of this distortion of the Gospel. These include ignorance, a limited theological vision, and the determining influence of white group interests. Finally, this thesis seeks to outline the consequences of privatization for the life and witness of the Baptist churches in South Africa since 1820.

The terms "privatization" and "South African Baptists" have already been briefly defined and are discussed further in chapter one. Certain other definitions now require explanation. The term "South Africa" refers to the area presently officially part of the Republic of South Africa as well as the so-called "independent homeland states" of Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthutswana and Venda. The term "Southern Africa" has been avoided (unless demanded by the context of the discussion) because it commonly includes areas such as Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and Lesotho.

Also included in the title of this thesis is a reference to the privatization of "the Christian faith". This means that the phenomenon of privatization, which is both an aspect and consequence of secularization, is discussed specifically in relation to the Christian faith and not in relation to the much broader category of "religion". Further, the terms "Christian faith" and "Christian Gospel" are used synonymously to refer to the Christian tradition as encapsulated in the Old and New Testaments, as well as the on-going theological interpretation (both academic and popular) of these scriptures in the changing contexts within which Christians experience and explain their faith. This means that the term "Christian faith" is not a static one; it is part of the task of each successive generation of Baptist believers and theologians to discover for themselves what is central or peripheral to their faith and its expression in the personal and social circumstances of life.

At least five reasons can be cited to indicate the value of this analysis of the South African Baptists. Firstly, even though the Baptists are a relatively small group within South Africa, world-wide they are the largest Protestant denomination. Baptists are heavily engaged in missionary work and theological education in many parts of the world. American Baptists, in particular, are both active and influential throughout Africa, including South Africa. This raises the question of how Baptists (both

overseas and in South Africa) should respond to the socio-religious challenges of their time. In short, by analysing the microcosm of the South African Baptists' context, both the historical Baptist tradition and present-day Baptist theological praxis can be reviewed.

A second reason for embarking on this study is the hope that other Christian churches can benefit from this analysis because privatization is by no means restricted to Baptist churches. South African Baptists, together with many other churches in South Africa, claim to be Evangelicals. But many Evangelicals in this country practice a conservative form of Evangelicalism that is characterised by a dualistic, individualistic and spiritualised version of the Christian Gospel. This raises the question : is such a privatised understanding of the Gospel compatible with historical and contemporary Evangelical thinking?

Thirdly, although a number of critical studies on South African churches have been recently completed, these books contain little or no specific analysis of the Baptist churches.
Consequently, it has not yet been clarified whether Baptist churches should be regarded as one of the "English speaking churches" or whether their racially divisive structure links them more closely to the "Afrikaans speaking churches", especially the Dutch Reformed Church. More generally, do white churches (at either the synod or congregational levels) tend to be united primarily by their socio-political commitments rather than divided by their denominational differences? And, amongst which, if any, of the prominent ecclesiastical groupings should the South African Baptists be classified?

A fourth reason for writing this thesis is that it departs from the traditional theological perceptions and methodological approaches of South African Baptist writings. It differs from the earlier general works of Batts and Hudson-Reed, for example, in that it is not a step-by-step description of the numerical growth of churches, the erection and improvements of church buildings and the individual ministries of various pastors. Further, this thesis deliberately endeavours to be conscious of its own methodology, agenda and ideological limitations. It seeks to produce a form of religious history that avoids the pitfall of theologising without simultaneously analysing the contexts within which Baptist theology in South Africa developed. It also recognises that much of what has passed for South African Baptist theology has all too often been confined within a white, male, middle-class and clerical perspective.

The fifth justification for this thesis is the hope that it will contribute to the emerging "alternative" Baptist tradition within South Africa. A number of articles and other studies have appeared in recent years which exhibit a common desire to develop a form of Baptist theological praxis and spirituality that can make a contribution to the search for personal and social well being in addition to political, ecclesiastical and economic liberation in South Africa. In my view, the National Awareness Workshop held in Barkly West in June 1990 was a major step forward in this regard, and I trust that this thesis will become part of that process.

In view of the five reasons cited above, it is inevitable that whilst some may be encouraged by what I have written, certain individuals and groups will be offended. Therefore, it is important for me to state that this analysis is not intended as a personal attack on, still less as a denigration of, the important contribution that other South African Baptists have made over many years. This study is my attempt to combine rigorous academic analysis, theological conviction, and personal experience. I have been closely associated with Baptist churches (either as a member or adherent) for nearly 20 years, and during this time I have been alternatively encouraged, challenged and appalled. As a white, middle-class South African, I share the complicity of this group in the deceit and destructiveness of Apartheid. As a woman, I am part of an oppressed majority within my own church. And as a theologian, I need to answer the question : what function has the South African Baptist tradition performed in relation to individual believers, the Baptist community, and within the broader South African social context?

Some of my methodological starting points, such as a concern for the social, historical, and theological contexts of Baptist thought and experience, have already been indicated. Other methodological parameters now require mention. As outlined in chapter two, this thesis seeks to combine the insights of the sociology of religion, modern historical methodology and theological analysis. Extensive use has been made of both Baptist material (eg newspapers, Handbooks, Centenary documents and unpublished material) and a range of other literature pertinent to this analysis. A questionnaire was also circulated at the 1989 Baptist Union Assembly, the results of which are discussed in chapter seven.

Concerning terminology, a few brief comments are in order. Throughout this thesis I have sought to use inclusive (non-sexist) language and to avoid racist terms. Where these occur in direct quotations, however, I have faithfully reproduced them both in the interests of historical accuracy and to stress the extent to which we all are haunted by our past. As far as

spelling is concerned, I have followed the British rather than the American spellings of words such as analyse and privatised. An exception is made in the case of technical terms such as privatization and secularization because they are more commonly spelt in this way.

Of what, then, do the seven chapters consist?

Chapter one is concerned with the task of answering two questions : who are the Baptists and what is privatization? It thus expands on the brief definitions already given and provides examples of the privatised theological praxis of the South African Baptists.

Chapter two is primarily a methodological excursus in which the sociological, historical, and theological approaches employed throughout the thesis are outlined and defended.

Chapter three deals with the Reformation period and seeks to uncover the theological roots of the Baptist tradition. Are these to be found in the English Baptist tradition of the 17th century, or must one look further back to the magisterial Reformers or the Continental Anabaptists of the 16th century?

Chapter four continues this historical and socio-theological analysis by elucidating the various streams of thought amongst the English Baptists of the 17th to 19th centuries. These historical analyses are important precisely because people's perceptions of the past are crucial (in both psychological and sociological terms) to their perceptions of present realities and future possibilities. For example, the realization that Baptist origins are closely linked to the social radicalism of the 16th and 17th centuries should cause modern Baptists to question their present theological and social conservatism.

The fifth chapter concentrates on the 19th century roots of the Baptists in South Africa and the influence of the English and German Baptist tradition on Baptist churches in this country. It is here that many of the problems bedeviling present-day Baptist churches (such as Euro-centrism and white domination) first found expression. Settler ideologies, the political and economic consequences of colonialism, racial attitudes and cultural prejudice all had a role to play in the development of 19th century Baptist theology, ecclesiastical structures and missionary policy.

Chapter six deals with the period between the establishment of the South African Baptist Missionary Society (1892) and the Centenary celebrations of the South African Baptist Union (1977). It is argued here that, contrary to the official version propagated by the Baptist Union,

segregation and white domination were perpetuated within both Baptist circles and the country as a whole.

The seventh chapter covers the most recent developments within Baptist churches in South Africa, that is, the period 1978-1990. It argues that reaction, reform and resistance constitute the three main Baptist responses to current social and ecclesiastical circumstances. Why did the black Baptist Convention of Southern Africa, for example, decide to break its associational ties with the South African Baptist Union, and what hope is there of a rapprochement between these two bodies?

The eighth, and final, chapter sums up the central arguments of the preceding chapters and indicates some possible directions that South African Baptists could and, in my view, should take. In short, what does the future hold for Baptists in South Africa and how can we be enabled to move into a less divisive and more united and liberated future?

****

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS PRIVATIZATION AND WHO ARE THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS?

During 1987, a Baptist Church in the Eastern Cape stated the concerns of its members as follows :

> We are looking for a Church where the Bible is preached, not politics; where our money is not given to the ANC; where we can grow spiritually and where our children get taught God's word.[1]

According to the same newspaper report, in response to the criticism this Baptist church had received from some other churches, the Pastor observed :

> As a church we are here to meet the needs of our people - first of all, the spiritual need - and many people are frustrated with the situation in churches where politics are emphasised instead of the word of God.

This distinction between spiritual and socio-political concerns is not simply restricted to a single church; it is reflected throughout South African Baptist theology, denominational structures, and the lack of concerted Baptist involvement in social transformation. Especially at the local congregational level, the illusion that politics and religion can be separated has certainly not been dispelled. As is argued later in this chapter, whilst the leaders of the Baptist Convention are seeking to develop a renewed, contextually orientated Baptist vision, the leaders of the Baptist Union have not moved beyond a superficial statement of the social implications of the Gospel they propound.

But what are the origins of the notion that religion can be relegated to the private sphere and separated from the public sphere? In order to answer this crucial question, one must <u>first</u> answer the question <u>"what is privatization"</u>? This is accomplished below by defining secularization; noting the relationship between secularization and privatization; and outlining the distinguishing features of privatization as it is manifested today.

The <u>second</u> aim of this chapter is to explain what is meant by the phrase "<u>the South African Baptists</u>". To this end, Baptist 16th, 17th and 18th century roots are briefly outlined; 19th century South African Baptist

---

1. <u>Daily Dispatch</u>, 11 November, 1987.

traditions are noted; important institutional developments amongst South African Baptists are explained; and, finally, the relationship between South African Baptists and the English and Afrikaans speaking churches as well as Evangelicals and Baptists elsewhere are discussed. This first chapter, therefore, provides an introductory analysis of the central motifs of the thesis.

A. WHAT IS PRIVATIZATION?

The present day manifestations of privatization cannot be properly understood without reference to the process of religious secularization and the historical development of privatization. To begin with, then, in what sense is the term "secularization" used in this thesis?

1. Secularization defined.

At the outset, secularization needs to be distinguished from secularism. This is necessary because as the process of secularization proceeded, it became increasingly identified with the rejection of religion common to secularism.[2] Glasner has distinguished between secularization and secularism in the following way :

> The latter is often regarded as actively non-religious, and even intolerant of any religious viewpoint, while the former implies a process of religious change, whose end result may involve the absence of religion, but which is not hostile to the idea of religion itself.[3]

Secularization, in short, does not necessarily result in the antipathy towards religion that is the essence of secularism.

Etymologically, the Latin root of the English word "secular" is saeculum. Originally it was a term which had a variety of meanings : "a generation", "the span of a century", or "the spirit of an age."[4] During

---

2. See O Chadwick's fascinating discussion in The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge : University Press, 1975).

3. P E Glasner, "The Social Sciences and the work of the Churches II. Secularization : its limitations and usefulness in Sociology" Exp T 83 (October 1971) p 19. See also P A Micklem, The Sacred and the Secular (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1948) p 163.

4. L Shiner, "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research" Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion 6 (1967) p 208.

the Middle Ages, the term was often used neutrally meaning a very long time but, after the Reformation, secularization was used in a technical and legal sense signifying the transfer of land from ecclesiastical to civil control. But, by the 19th century, the "militant" sense of the word began to feature more prominently and was used in the sense of secularization being a philosophy either actively opposed to or indifferent to religion.[5] Secularization could, therefore, be defined as a "growing tendency in mankind to do without religion or to try to do without religion."[6] In the 20th century, it is claimed, this process of secularization has continued, extending its influence over politics, education, welfare, science and medicine. The term secularization also appears in the writings of early sociologists such as Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber, where it is used as an analytical and descriptive term.

The debate concerning secularization is a long and complex one, and its ramifications are not the direct concern of this thesis. It is necessary, however, to note its main features in order to determine the meaning and origins of privatization. Larry Shiner's excellent article entitled "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research" provides a useful summary of the debate.[7] He analyses a variety of views amongst sociologists, eg, that secularization is inevitable, improbable or impossible.[8] He notes, further, that the reaction from theologians to the notion of secularization as the "decline of religion" has ranged from a total rejection of the thesis (eg by Greely) to a broad acceptance (eg by Harvey Cox).[9] He also points out that during the 20th century, several different meanings of the term have been employed. Shiner outlines six basic meanings of the term secularization:

1. The decline of religion
2. Conformity with "this" world
3. The disengagement of society from religion
4. The transposition of religious beliefs and institutions
5. The de-sacralization of the world

---

5. Shiner, ibid, p 208.

6. O Chadwick, op cit, p 17.

7. Shiner, op cit, pp 207-220.

8. See M Hill, A Sociology of Religion (London : Heinemann, 1973), p 228.

9. cf Andrew M Greely, Unsecular Man : The Persistence of Religion (New York : Delta, 1972) and H Cox, The Secular City (New York : Macmillan, 1965).

6. The movement from a "sacred" to a "secular" society

The first and third of these definitions, namely the "decline of religion" and the "disengagement of society from religion" are directly relevant to this thesis.

Secularization can be understood in the sense of the "decline of religion". This sense of the term is close to that of secularism for its end result would be a "religionless" society.[10] It cannot be denied that, in certain areas, religious decline (in terms of personal religious adherence and social influence) has occurred.[11] Nevertheless, despite the evidence collated concerning matters such as the decline of church attendance, decrease of respect for clergy, and doubts concerning doctrine, there are some difficulties that are associated with this definition of secularization. For example, at which point did the decline begin and how can one measure this decline? Can one really speak of the 12th (or any other) century as a "golden age of faith"? To put it differently, the widespread practice of conventional religion must not be confused with deep or genuine religious commitment.[12]

A further critique of the "decline of religion" thesis has come from the pen of D Lyon.[13] He both describes and criticises (what he terms) the "strong secularization thesis" and points out that criticisms of this thesis have come from thinkers such as Mary Douglas and Thomas Luckmann. The question must be asked : has the theory of secularization not been imposed on the historical data? Douglas, for example, argues that the notion that we, as "moderns", are totally different to our forefathers, is a result of "tribal myopia". David Martin points out that to ignore the differences between the degrees of secularization in different countries - such as in America and Sweden - is to distort the available evidence.[14] These critiques by Douglas and Martin are supported by Greely's book, Unsecular

---

10. Shiner, op cit, p 209.

11. B Wilson, Religion in Secular Society (London : Watts, 1966) p xiv quoted in Hill, op cit, p 232 and Glasner, op cit, pp 19ff.

12. Shiner, op cit, p 210.

13. D Lyon, "Secularization : the fate of faith in modern society" Themelios, 10:1 (Sept 1984) pp 14-22.

14. Mary Douglas, "The Effects of Modernization on Religious Change" Daedalus 111 : 1 (1982) pp 1-19 and David Martin, A General Theory of Secularization (Oxford : Blackwell, 1978).

Man, in which he shows that in the USA, at least, one cannot speak of secularization as if it were a foregone conclusion.[15] Finally, the "decline of religion" thesis takes insufficient cognisance of the so-called new religious movements. These include a resurgence of Evangelicalism, the Charismatic movement and also a broad range of cults, beliefs and movements linked with traditions other than the Christian tradition. For all these reasons, Lyon has concluded :

> The result of a proper integration of history and sociology should be that notions of secularization being irreversibly one-directional are jettisoned. History is much messier; the tide of secularization ebbs and flows.[16]

In short, there can be no confident claims that the modern world is now a "religionless society".

There is, however, an increasing tendency to define secularization in terms of the social decline of religion. Brian Wilson speaks of a process "by which religious institutions, actions and consciousness, lose their social significance."[17] This understanding of the decreasing social influence of religion can be linked with Max Weber's work on "rationalization." In The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, he showed that initially the ideas of Puritanism were indirectly linked with early capitalism, but that these Puritan values were later "submerged" as capitalism progressed.[18] Consequently, religion has become socially irrelevant, it is a "residual remnant" and has been confined to the private sphere.[19] In brief, secularization refers to the declining, direct public influence of the Gospel.

What evidence can be cited in defence of secularization defined as the decline of the social power of religious beliefs and institutions?

The Renaissance was a crucial period in Western history for it gave to Western thought the definite secular shape which was to become ever more pronounced as time went on. During the Renaissance, the synthesis between

---

15. Greely, op cit.

16. Lyon, op cit, p 19.

17. Lyon, ibid, p 17 and B Wilson, Religion in Sociological Perspective (Oxford : University Press, 1982) p 149.

18. M Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (London : George Allen and Unwin, 1930).

19. Lyon, op cit, pp 17-18. According to Lyon, other versions of the strong secularization thesis can be found in the writings of Durkheim, Marx and Vernon Pratt.

the sacred and the secular which had so characterised the Constantinian unity of Church and State during the Medieval period, was undermined by the new forms of thought emerging within Western society.[20]

Subsequently, the Reformation, by both destroying the church's unity and weakening its temporal power, contributed (albeit indirectly) to the expropriation of church property and financial control. In this sense, the Reformation, by breaking up the age-old unity of "Christendom" was certainly an agent of secularization.[21] Berger has argued that Christianity has been its own "grave-digger" in that by encouraging differentiation (especially from the Reformation onwards) it has contributed to its own demise.[22]

The series of religious wars that troubled Europe during the 16th century resulted in both moral and intellectual confusion. Terry Pinkard has argued that, particularly in France, the sovereignty of the ruler filled the political and moral authority vacuum created by the conflicts between Protestants and Catholics.[23] Henceforth, religious perceptions and contributions were increasingly relegated to the private sphere.

A further repercussion of the long-term religious conflict engendered by the Reformation was that it compelled the various churches to give urgent attention to the formulation of their own doctrinal systems and defend themselves against the influence and ambitions of the others. This meant that the urgent task of revising their social ethics in the light of important social changes was largely neglected. Increasing numbers of Europeans pursued their political, cultural and economic purposes without reference to religious principle or prescription.

Thereafter, the gradual emergence of a money economy, the growth of the new entrepreneurial class, the development of the secular states and philosophical rationalism heralded a new order, one which was to have profound implications for the traditional structure of Western society and the power and influence of the Christian Church. Similarly, the subsequent rise of modern science was, at times, characterised by the attempt of

---

20. P A Micklem, op cit, p 134.

21. C Villa-Vicencio, "Protestantism, Modernity and Justification by Faith" Scottish Journal of Theology 38 (1985) p 372.

22. P Berger, The Social Reality of Religion (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1967) pp 116ff, esp 132.

23. T Pinkard, Democratic Liberalism and Social Union (Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1987) pp 53-63.

scientists to throw off the stifling yoke of ecclesiastical prescription and intransigence and pursue their work using the evidence provided by the natural (secular) world alone.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Deism contributed to secularization in the sense that the Deists began by separating God from the physical world and then went on to banish God from earthly concerns into some far-away transcendent realm. (Later, argues Wilson, the 19th and 20th centuries completed the process by removing the idea of God altogether).[24]

The failure of the Christian Churches to adapt and respond to the social changes generated by the collapse of Feudalism, the Industrial Revolution and the new political structures, meant that they increasingly became social anachronisms. By the 19th century, the social responsibility of the Christian was increasingly overshadowed by the self-interest and spiritual introspection of the religion of the middle classes.[25] Thus, during the 19th century missionary heyday, the majority of missionaries tended either to support colonialism or to withhold social comment altogether. By the mid-20th century Europe, at least, was regarded by many as a "post-Christian" society.

Of what relevance is this debate to the present thesis? In South Africa, as compared to European countries such as Britain or Sweden, the number of people attending church services is relatively high and even non-churchgoers may be heard to subscribe to some sort of Christian ethic. In South Africa, whilst religion has declined in the lives of certain people and in some spheres of life, one cannot speak of a "religionless" society. Furthermore, in this country, the religion of the so-called English speaking churches was closely associated with British imperialism, whilst the Afrikaans speaking churches for years both provided the central religious legitimation for Apartheid and imposed their "Christian National" philosophy on the entire country.[26] Christianity, then, has played a vital (and often destructive) role in South Africa's recent history. It is significant, however, that the South African Baptists have privatised their religious

---

24. Cf Wilson, op cit pp 11-12.

25. Villa-Vicencio, "Protestantism, Modernity and Justification by Faith" ibid, p 376-377 and H Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York : Meridian, 1929/1957) pp 77-105.

26. Arguably, the amalgam of Christianity and Colonialism contributed largely to the "de-sacralization" of the African world, whilst Afrikaner unity of church and volk created a self-serving civil religion.

faith and, thus, "disengaged" it from the social milieu. By withdrawing, the South African Baptists have contributed to the process of secularization rather than combatting this process with a prophetic and vital social expression of their faith within the broad South African context.

2. The Relationship between Secularization and Privatization.

Although the term "privatization" is not often used within the sociology of religion, the basic understanding of religion as something which operates on a purely private and personal level frequently finds expression. Most often, the terms "disengagement" or "differentiation" are employed, and these are regarded as aspects of the much broader, and exceedingly complicated process of secularization already alluded to above.[27] Privatization, then, is both an aspect and a result of secularization. This is because privatization involves the "disengagement" from the secular world and is a result of the withdrawal of religious thought and involvement from "the world". Shiner defines "disengagement" as follows :

> Society separates itself from the religious understanding which has previously informed it in order to constitute itself an autonomous reality and consequently to limit religion to the sphere of private life. The culmination of this kind of secularization would be a religion of a purely inward character, influencing neither institutions nor corporate action, and a society in which religion made no appearance outside the sphere of the religious group.[28]

In this process, religious authority is first opposed by the growing secular powers, then becomes more and more alienated from social affairs and is, finally, limited to the existential realm of individual persons. Amongst other things, this withdrawal results in a truncated faith and a false dichotomy between personal and social ethics.

The central point is that religion is limited "to the sphere of private life." As the influence of religion becomes diminished, the social authority and power of religion is reduced and religion is restricted to the private sphere. In short, religion becomes privatised. A similar definition of this process of privatization (or "disengagement") can be found in Hill's discussion of secularization. He puts it like this :

---

27. For a discussion of differentiation, see Hill, op cit, p 239 and Shiner, op cit, p 214.

28. Shiner, op cit, p 212.

> Instead of religion's function being that of a primary source of legitimation for the whole of society, it becomes increasingly a matter of private choice, restricted to the sphere of religiously interested participants. As a consequence of this process religion loses its public role, and as a corollary society looks elsewhere for the source of its authority.[29]

Research into this form of secularization has been popular especially with historians who have sought to trace both its intellectual-existential and the institutional-social forms. The institutional-social type of disengagement is usually linked to the rise of the secular state. Secularization is measured in terms of the "take-over" - abrupt or gradual - of various functions which were previously the domain of religious institutions. This "disengagement" argument places a lot of emphasis on the fact that so many of the educational and welfare services previously provided by the churches are now supplied by the secular state. The intellectual-existential form of disengagement involves the attempt to separate fields of knowledge, such as scientific knowledge, from the presuppositions of religious faith. The same process may be detected in other aspects of culture such as art, business, politics and social structures.

Both the institutional-social and the intellectual-existential aspects of "disengagement" are relevant to this thesis. In the following pages it is ascertained to what extent the South African Baptist Churches can be regarded as having become "disengaged" from the intellectual and social institutions of South African existence. Ironically, this withdrawal into the private religious sphere has resulted in both spiritual poverty and de facto support for the status quo, in the interest of the dominant white group within the Baptist Union. Rather than witnessing to or challenging "the world", Baptists have been almost entirely conformed to South African patterns of social prejudice and structural exploitation.

3. The distinguishing features of Privatization.

Thus, privatization, or disengagement, developed over a long period of time in Western history. As a result of colonialism and the subsequent influence of the West over Africa (and other parts of the world), the social process of secularization and, thereby, the privatization of religion, are no longer restricted to the West. Certainly, secularization and

---

29. Hill, op cit, p 238.

privatization are a pertinent socio-religious phenomena in South Africa today.

Privatization, says Cook, "is a process by which there is a cleavage between the private and public spheres of life."[30] In this sense, privatization is virtually synonymous with quietism (sometimes termed pietism) which refers to a type of theological praxis which fails to encompass the socio-political and economic implications of the Christian faith.[31] Privatization is also used to mean the removal of the "critical and creative functions" of theology "from public scrutiny and their confinement to a narrow few in the church".[32]

A privatised religion is a form of faith in which individuals turn to religion precisely in order to either escape, or to withdraw from, the pressures and problems of social reality. Whereas in previous centuries, the clergy were the educators, the protectors of community's morals, the social workers, the legal advisors, the literate minority, and the advisors of rulers, their ministry is now much more circumscribed :

> The Presidency that the Church once exercised over social life has gone, as other agencies have assumed the functions that it once fulfilled. Instead of being the local centre of community life, the Church has become more narrowly and specifically a religious centre, segregated and encapsulated.[33]

Religion, having been largely evacuated from the social, secular realm, has concentrated its energies on the existential needs of the individual. Thus, according to Micklem,

> ... the prevailing characteristic of the modern age is not the repudiation of religion as such, but its relegation to a private and domestic sphere, as the other-worldly refuge of the individual soul, and its tacit renunciation of any claim to be a main informing and determining influence in the wider fields of activity.[34]

---

30. D Cook, The Moral Maze (London : SPCK, 1983) p 6.

31. The modern use of the term "pietism" is confusing because it often fails to note that the 17th century pietism of von Zinzendorf (in Germany) and Fox (in England) sought to apply the Gospel to the broader social ills of their times.

32. See R A McCormick and R P McBrien, "Theology and Public responsibility" America 165:8 (28 Sept 1991) p 184.

33. Wilson, Contemporary Transformations of Religion, p 16.

34. Micklem, op cit, p 173, and cf Wilson, ibid, p 7.

Within the South African situation, the privatization of the Christian faith has meant that vast numbers of Baptists are not actively seeking to promote their faith in the context of social reality. Extreme forms of privatization completely deny the social content of the Christian Gospel (and unconsciously propagate a reactionary form of religion and politics), whilst the more moderate forms proclaim the Gospel as the solution to social ills without realising the full structural or societal implications of their own theological assertions. As is argued in chapters six and seven, this has led to the situation whereby Baptists verbally and theologically decry Apartheid, whilst assiduously implementing it throughout the structures of their denomination.

What, then, are the dominant features of privatization? Firstly, a privatised theology is inherently dualistic. It separates reality into different spheres whereby the influence of religion is thought to bear upon the private but not the public sphere. Dualism operates on several levels: between the spiritual and the material; the secular and the sacred; the saving of souls and social involvement; theological statements and political activism, etc.

Dualism is based on an apocalyptic, world-denying approach according to which the secular world will pass away completely and be replaced by a new world. There is, therefore, no point in the attempted salvation of society or the natural world. This approach does not take into cognisance the transforming vision of Romans 8, for example, in which the present creation groans in anticipation, not of its destruction, but of its deliverance. It also proceeds from an extremely circumscribed view of the Gospel, sin, salvation, the mission of the Church and the Kingdom (rule) of God.

Dualism results in an artificial separation between personal and social ethics. A dichotomy is created between "secular" concerns, on the one hand, and "spiritual" concerns on the other. Thus, to "save souls" is the mission of the church, but to engage in the active, structural transformation of society is not conceived of as part of the Church's mission. At most, the duty of the Church is conceived of as verbally proclaiming the social implications of the Gospel to the governing authorities. Thus, to encourage the spiritual growth of individuals is laudable, but to seek to improve the material lifestyle of communities by restructuring the educational system, the laws of the country and the economy, is seen as unnecessary, even counter-productive, to the essential task of converting individuals. Thus, within the South African Baptist Union members are encouraged to give money for the relief of victims of floods and droughts, but are not encouraged to

ask questions about the root causes of poverty or the reasons why certain people are housed in areas vulnerable to periodic floods. To critique and transform the political and economic systems that lead to the lack of dignity, land, skills and opportunity is, for many Baptists, completely unrelated to the "Good News".

Dualism, then, seeks to separate the Gospel and social concerns. But, in so doing, it renders itself victim to reactionary ideological influences of which it is not even aware. The "Social Gospel" is seen as a threat to the "real Gospel". Views such as these are particularly common amongst those on the "right" of the Baptist spectrum, but also occur across the board because of the mistaken belief that one's conception of the Gospel can be free from ideological influence. This made it possible for Baptist ministers to believe that "politics should not be mixed with religion" whilst simultaneously urging their members to "pray for our boys on the border". As D Walker puts it :

> It creates an otherworldly form of faith in which it is frighteningly possible to be "spiritual" and racist at the same time because the political side of life is kept separate from the higher 'spiritual side'.[35]

A further important element of privatization is the spiritualization of the Gospel. For example, much of the Old Testament as well as the Luke 4.18-20 passage is spiritualised, whilst passages such as Matt 25.31-46 are generally neglected. Poverty, blindness, hunger, and thirst are understood in terms of spiritual needs. Sin is primarily conceived of as alienation from God; salvation therefore means "getting right with God". Consequently, sin and salvation are treated as having exclusively vertical (God-human) implications.[36] Reconciliation between people, if touched upon at all, is largely restricted to inter-personal or inter-family categories, and seldom extended to social categories. Exploitation, discrimination, and injustice are, thus, social rather than religious problems. This leads to a restricted, one-dimensional form of faith that falls far short of the holistic spirituality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.[37] A distinction can

---

35. D Walker, "The vision of an alternative Baptist community" (Unpublished paper, 1990) p 5.

36. This practice is not restricted to Baptists : see A Nolan's discussion in God in South Africa (Cape Town : David Philip, 1988) pp 108 ff.

37. Cf E O'Connor, Journey Inward, Journey Outward (New York : Harper and Row, 1968) and K Leech, An Introduction to Christian Spirituality (London : Sheldon Press, 1980).

thus be made between spiritualization (which restricts the content and implications of the Gospel) and a genuine, Christian spirituality (in which the spiritual, personal, and social dimensions of the Gospel are integrated).

A further aspect of privatization is a lack of contextual analysis. Theological doctrines (such as justification by faith) are isolated from their original socio-historical context and uncritically imposed on the present context. This lack of contextual awareness can be seen also in popular theology such as pulpit preaching. Sermons at the annual Baptist Assemblies are seldom rooted in concrete social reality. The subject of the Church, for example, is dealt with in an idealistic and conceptual way, and the facts of a divided Church within a divided South Africa are simply glossed over.

This lack of contextual awareness has at least two aspects, an intellectual and a social "disengagement". Baptists have distanced themselves, intellectually, from the thinking of academic theologians, especially from South African contextual theologians, and from social sciences such as sociology, history and psychology.[38] Socially, white Baptists are distanced from the exploitation, poverty, fear, and lack of opportunity that is the daily experience of black Baptists. Equally, they are isolated from the black consciousness and resistance movements. Consequently, the white members of the Baptist Union are largely detached from the intellectual and social context of black Baptists and are, thus, able to perpetuate a privatised and inward looking "laager" mentality.

All of this reinforces the individualism that is so characteristic of the dominant Baptist Union's theological tradition. White South African Baptists share in the assumptions of Western philosophy in which the individual is given pride of place. As further outlined in chapter three, individualism results from the false assumption that the evangelical emphasis on the personal appropriation of the Gospel of salvation implies that the implications of salvation are purely personal. This is an unwarranted conclusion. Urbanisation, industrialisation and education all encourage competition, and have contributed to the isolation of individuals from community orientations and involvement. This concentration on individual ethics has precluded the development of an effective Christian social ethic.

Embedded within this privatization of the Christian Gospel is an

---

38. Concerning psychology, see Morton T Kelsey, The Other Side of Silence (New York : Paulist Press, 1976) pp 190 & 207; also O'Connor, op cit, pp 1-27 and 52-61.

unwillingness, or inability, to recognise the ideological content within any conceptualization of the Christian Gospel. Self-interest, group allegiances, and social conditioning are not taken into account, and the myth of a "pure" Gospel is simply perpetuated. The definition of the Gospel as given by the leaders of the Baptist Union becomes the yardstick against which all other definitions are measured. To question this tradition is, thus, not to question one interpretation of the Gospel, but to question the Gospel itself. This is seen as constituting disloyalty, even unbelief. In other words, the prophetic witness which precedes any reformulation or contextualization of the Christian faith is silenced.

A critique of privatised religion is neither a criticism nor a rejection of personal salvation. (But it is a rejection of an individualistic understanding of the Christian faith). It is not the value and importance of the personal appropriation of the message of salvation that is at issue here. What is at issue is the fact that for so many Christians, this is where their faith ends. But, as shown in Eph 2.8-10, good works must inescapably follow conversion, and where else are good works performed if they are not performed in the context of social reality? An essential aspect of the problem is that the very doctrines of sin, salvation, the church and mission are privatised. Consequently, the social aspects of these doctrines are virtually unknown to Baptist members. Tragically, salvation is understood primarily (if not exclusively) as the justification and sanctification of the individual. Even conversion is conceived of as beginning and ending with the individual's relationship with God. But conversion is not something that only affects the internal and spiritual aspects of the converted person's nature; it must go on to affect the physical and social aspects of the person as well. Moreover, these converted persons make up a large community. This should mean that the social influence of Christians should include not only the impact of individual Christians (in various spheres such as the home, education, industry, agriculture, etc) but also the <u>combined</u> effect of group strategies and the moral force of the Church as an institution. Privatization, however, has deprived the Christian Church of the cumulative social impact of its members.

Traditionally Baptists have all too readily accepted the naïve dictum: "the renewal of the individual automatically reforms society." This dictum is, however, inadequate because it seriously under-estimates the power of corporate evil. Sin is to be found not only in the personal lives of individuals, but also in the structures of society which have been developed and established by sinful humanity. Both individual and corporate sin have

to be radically dealt with before society can even begin to conform to God's perfect will for it. For this reason, philanthropic acts, while good and essential, are insufficient as a means of dealing with the sin that pervades the entire structure of life.

The inadequacy of the view that the renewal of the individual automatically reforms society is further demonstrated by the South African situation. In a country in which the majority of the population claims some sort of Christian allegiance, the evil policy of Apartheid has been propagated for over forty years, both by staunch church-goers and many Afrikaner theologians. For several decades (and, to a limited extent, even now) individual Christians, including Baptists, have resisted the radical reform of society, either actively or by default. Clearly, individual conversions do not automatically lead to the restructuring of society.

In conclusion, the words of Gerhard Ebeling are extremely pertinent :

> Christianity is constantly in danger of becoming pagan precisely where it seeks to be most pious ... the spiritual realm is then made into a world on its own, a separate reality which passes by the world as it really is, instead of engaging with it ... The extreme possibilities of separation join hands : atheistic and, as it were, purely religious, purely spiritual talk of God. Both leave the world without God and God without the world.[39]

If what Ebeling says here is true, it means that a "spiritual" theology, in its attempt to escape the corruption of the world by withdrawing from the world, gives this corruption full reign. In short, the Church itself deprives the world of God's presence and saving power. Rather than withdrawing from the world (or simply conforming to it), the Christian Church must apply its intellectual, spiritual, moral and practical energies to resisting the abuse of secular power, social injustice, moral anarchy and rampant technology. It must counter-act the privatization of religion, the de-personalization of humanity, and the repudiation of God's power and concern in relation to the alienated and degenerate state in which the human race finds itself. In South Africa, this is particularly important in the light of the fact that privatization will only result in the Church becoming even more quietistic and ineffective. Privatization will also leave ample room for those who wish to pursue pragmatic, amoral and unjust policies.

After this brief discussion of the key terms secularization and privatization, an attempt can now be made to identify precisely who the South African Baptists are.

---

39. Quoted by Villa-Vicencio, op cit, p 381 from G Ebeling, Word and Faith (Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1963) p 358. My emphasis.

B. WHO ARE THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS?

Because of the Baptist emphasis on voluntary association, congregational government and freedom of religious conscience, the South African Baptists always speak of themselves as members of a union of Baptists, and not as the Baptist Church of South Africa.[40] This makes definition of the phrase "the South African Baptists" a difficult task.

For the purposes of this thesis, the phrase "the South African Baptists" will include the early English and German Baptist settlers and all those member churches (mainly white) who established the Baptist Union in 1877 and have since been part of this Union. It also includes the early African Baptist churches established by the work of the National Black American Baptists which were later incorporated into the Union as a separate association called the Bantu Baptist Church (1927). Other associations within the Baptist Union have included the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk (ABK), the Indian Baptist Mission (IBM) and the Natal Indian Baptist Association (NIBA).[41] The black Baptist Convention withdrew its associational status from the Baptist Union in 1987 and now forms an independent group called the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa. For reasons of space, however, particular emphasis will be given in this study to the predominantly white Baptist Union and the predominantly black Baptist Convention.

In an attempt to define who the South African Baptists are, various avenues could be pursued. For example, Baptists could be defined in terms of their theology, history or structures. Or they could be compared to other South African churches. Arguably all of these are valuable means. Therefore, in this subsection the following aspects of Baptist identity are briefly examined : 16th to 18th century Baptist roots; the 19th century South African Baptist origins; South African Baptist institutional developments; and the relationship between South African Baptists and other South African churches, Evangelicals and Baptists.

Whilst this may seem a simple task it is, in fact, problematic in the extreme. This is because a wide discrepancy exists between what may be

---

40. See C W Parnell, "The detailed history" in (ed) S Hudson-Reed, Together for a Century : History of the Baptist Union of South Africa, 1877-1977 (Pietermaritzburg : SA Baptist Historical Society, c 1977), p 63. (Hereafter, Together).

41. Cf S Hudson-Reed, By Taking Heed : The history of Baptists in South African, 1820-1977 (Roodepoort : Baptist Publishing House, 1983) pp 207 ff & 272 ff. (Hereafter By Taking Heed).

termed the "official" version of the Baptist Union of South Africa and an emergent, alternative tradition in Baptist circles within South Africa.[42] Traditional Baptist writings operate on the Western philosophical perception that theory and practice, or ideas and their application, can be neatly distinguished. However, theory (or theology) more often than not emerges out of concrete experience, so that praxis is the creative interplay of theory (or ideas) and practice. Theological praxis, then, is the interwoven and dynamic pattern of religious experience, socio-cultural, political and economic realities, and theological formulation. Baptist doctrine, therefore, cannot be separated from the historical, psychological and social context of Baptist believers, because its development and expression are inevitably influenced by these factors.

1. 16th to 18th century Baptist theological roots.

Traditionally, South African Baptists have traced their historical and theological roots to the English Baptists of the 17th century. This perception is open to dispute for at least three reasons. Firstly, on the grounds that any discussion of Baptist roots must begin with a consideration of the Continental and, especially, Dutch Anabaptists. As argued in chapter three, there were both historical and theological links between the early English Baptists and the Anabaptists.

Secondly, the English Baptist tradition itself is not a simple or monolithic one. As is shown in chapter four, between 1612 and 1820, the English Baptists experienced war, peace, revolution and persecution. They responded by variously participating in social revolution, withdrawing from social involvement, and in being part of the nonconformist movement. They experienced both religious decline and revival. Of which of these aspects of their tradition were the 1820 Baptist settlers aware, and how did they, in turn, respond (both theologically and socially) to their new environment?

Thirdly, a proper consideration of South African Baptist origins must include mention of the German Baptist roots. The modern German Baptist churches originated with the revivals initiated by Gerhard Oncken (1834 onwards). This raises a further question : how did the German Baptist

---

42. See L Kretzschmar, "A Theology of Dominance : An alternative history of the South African Baptist Union" in (eds) D Hoffmeister and B Gurney, Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (Johannesburg : Awareness Campaign Committee of the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa, 1990) pp 24-32. (Hereafter, Barkly West).

43. Quoted in full in the Appendix, Enclosures 1 & 3.

relationship between Church and State or the Christian's social responsibility, despite the fact that the Baptist churches emerged during the socio-economic, political and religious crucibles of the Reformation and the English Civil War. It would appear that those who drew up, or assented to, this "Statement of Belief" conceived of their faith as an intellectual assent to a set of abstract and unchanging theological formulations, despite the fact that these very doctrinal formulations arose out of, and effectively addressed, particular contexts. This makes it easy for modern Baptists to forget the controversial (and contextual) nature of their theological heritage. For example, in Europe, the writings of Luther were greeted with the same mixture of either horror (by those wielding political and religious power) or delight (by those who hoped for a change in their religious and political circumstances) as were the pages of the Kairos Document (1985) during the State of Emergency in South Africa.

Also absent from this Statement of Belief is any mention of the early 20th century theological conflicts between Conservative Evangelicals and Liberal theologians, giving the impression that there was no particular theological context out of which this statement of faith emerged in 1924.[44] In addition, no reference is made to the social context within which South African Baptists lived in this country. Consequently, this Statement of Belief was re-printed year after year in the South African Baptist Handbooks, without significant revision, despite an ever-changing social context. To date, this Statement of Belief has not been revised by the Baptist Union.[45]

It is significant that the next major theological formulation to be produced by the Baptist Union was the Statement of six Baptist Principles 1987. Here a preamble was provided but it contained only a summary of the earlier Statement of Belief and no explanation as to why such a statement of Baptist Principles was deemed necessary at that time. Further, no references were made to Baptist history or theological roots, let alone to

---

44. For this information see J Vink, "A critical study of the Relevance of Sociology in the training of Baptist ministers in South Africa" (UNISA, MA, 1990) pp 70 ff. Sadly, Vink does not discuss the social function of the SA Baptist faith and he maintains a traditional, even fundamentalist, Baptist view of the Bible, ministry and mission.

45. The two clauses added to this Statement by the FCB were concerned with the issues of human rights, social relationships and nature. (See the Appendix, Enclosure 1).

the context of modern South African Baptists (In 1987 the State of Emergency was in force).

This Statement of Baptist Principles refers to the "distinctive emphases arising out of our understanding of the Scriptures", but reveals no understanding of the modern hermeneutical debate, especially the influence that the contexts of the modern interpreter(s) have on biblical interpretations. In this document, the doctrines of the Church, believer's baptism, congregational government and the priesthood of believers are all affirmed without any reference whatsoever to the social, cultural or political context within which Christians live. Rather than producing a bold, relevant and challenging affirmation of Christian faith, the authors of this document (as in the case of the earlier Statement of Belief) simply fell back on traditional formulations; by seeking to be uncontroversial they ended up with a dated, rigid and largely irrelevant document. Not that the clauses are false or unimportant in themselves; on the contrary. But their formulation and range ignore the burning questions of our day. Thus, 20th century controversies concerning the Holy Spirit, the Ecumenical Movement, more holistic definitions of Christian mission, the African context of faith and witness, richer forms of worship, a preferential option for the poor, and both ecological and gender concerns, are entirely absent. Despite the world-wide religious debate concerning women, this statement uses exclusive language and its formulation of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers contains no hint as to the role of women in the Baptist churches of the 20th century.

This lack of contextual awareness is even more evident in relation to the last two clauses of the Statement of Baptist Principle. The principle of religious liberty, for which thousands of Anabaptists were drowned and torn asunder, is completely abstracted from the civil liberties for which they died. Thus, at a time when many Christians were being harassed by the State for their struggle for the civic liberties of black South Africans, the predominantly white Baptist Union Assembly ratified a privatised and abstract formulation of the doctrine of the separation of Church and State. Similarly, the Union's understanding of this doctrine is overly simplistic since it closely follows Luther's easily abused and misunderstood "two kingdoms" doctrine and fails to explain the relationship between the Christian faith and social reality. Whilst certain other English speaking churches were declaring the Nationalist government an unjust regime, the

(white) Baptists were blithely side-stepping the concrete socio-economic and political issues facing Christians in South Africa in the mid-1980's.[46]

The validity of these criticisms was borne out by the establishment of the Fellowship of Concerned Baptists (FCB) by a group of disenchanted Baptists during the 1986 Baptist Assembly. In December 1987, Baptist Convention of Southern Africa declared itself independent of the Baptist Union. The aims and objectives of the FCB (and the reasons for the decision of the Baptist Convention) are discussed in chapter seven, but it should be noted here that these two events signalled serious disagreement with Baptist Union theology, policy and religious practice.

In essence, the vital and challenging historical and theological origins of the Baptists have been emasculated by the privatised interpretations of white, 19th and 20th century South African Baptists.

2. The 19th Century Roots of the South African Baptists.

Historically, the South African Baptist origins date back to the churches established in the Eastern Cape by the 19th century English and German Baptist settlers.[47] The English Baptist settlers were part of a Wesleyan party led by Rev W Shaw. En route to South Africa, several Baptists grouped themselves under W Shepherd and, on landing, formed a Baptist church at the Assegai Bush river (Salem). This was followed by the establishment of the Grahamstown congregation (1823) under Rev W Miller, later pastored by Rev William Davies (c 1833 onwards). After the Grahamstown church had been built and the erection of a church begun at Kariega, building operations were halted by a succession of Frontier wars (1834 ff). Subsequently, a series of new churches were established : Port Elizabeth (1854); Durban (1864); Alice (1874); and Cape Town (1876).

The second wave of settlers (1857-59) was that of German soldiers (originally recruited for the Crimean War), followed by groups of German civilians.[48] Included in this group were five Baptists, one of whom, Carsten Langhein, was ordained by the English minister Rev Hay in 1861. By the end of that year, the German Baptists numbered 61 members. Between 1861-

---

46. See C Villa-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar : Classic and Contemporary Texts on Church and State (Cape Town : David Philip, 1986) pp 225-269.

47. S Hudson-Reed, Together, p 11 ff.

48. C W Parnell, "The detailed History", in Together, pp 18 ff.

1867 German Baptist membership grew from 61 to nearly 300. Meanwhile, an appeal for help was directed towards G Oncken and, in 1867, Carl Hugo Gutsche and his wife Mary arrived in King William's Town. Between 1876 and 1892, Gutsche established 25 churches, all of which were opened free of debt.[49] In 1867, an Afrikaans (Dutch) farmer by the name of J D Odendaal was baptised by the German Baptists. He was ordained by them in 1875 and later became the founder of the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk (ABK).

These are identifiable as the "facts" of these early beginnings. But, facts are never entirely objective items of data. Inevitably they are both selected and interpreted. Thus, to narrate the "simple facts" of early Baptists beginnings without reference to the context within which the settlers operated, is actually to distort the historical roots of the South African Baptist denomination.

A traditional approach to the origins of the South African Baptist churches recognises the fact that this denomination was established here as a direct consequence of the 1820 English and 1857-59 German settlers' occupation of the Zuurveld in the Eastern Cape.[50] Less often mentioned, let alone rigorously analysed, are the implications of these origins for the later theological and institutional growth of these churches. For instance, because these were settler churches, Baptist church members identified with the ambitions and fears of the settlers and were part and parcel of the colonial occupation of Xhosa land. The negative effects that these 19th century roots had on 20th century relations between different racial groups within the Baptist Union, cannot be overestimated.

The very limited size of the Baptist groups meant that they were, sociologically speaking, a rather threatened group. Not only did they have to survive in a climatically hostile environment but, as shown in more detail in chapter five, they were also embroiled in military and social conflicts. Therefore, this period of South African Baptist history was characterised by the attempt of a young, small and struggling church to establish itself on the sub-continent of Africa. These struggles were intensified by the fact that the English Baptist settlers were given very little financial or other support by Baptists "at home" and they existed somewhat precariously. Having also experienced periods of persecution (and social ostracism) in both England and Germany, the Baptists tended to form tightly-knit social and

---

49. See Hudson-Reed, Together, p 21.

50. See S Hudson-Reed, By taking Heed, pp 15ff.

ecclesiastical groups. Their memory of persecution and their relative numerical insignificance led to social isolation and an emphasis on internal ecclesiastical affairs. Baptist nonconformity was restricted to religious affairs and certainly did not extend to the socio-political realm. Furthermore, churches separated by language, culture and doctrine were the norm. Even when the Baptist Union was formed in 1877, a great many of the German Baptists did not join largely because they were opposed to the practice of "open communion". Nearly a century later, most of the Border churches were members of the German Bund rather than the Baptist Union and, only in 1955, did the Bund amalgamate with the Union. Later institutional developments, as a result of the conversion of Afrikaners and blacks, continued this tradition of having separate churches for separate language and cultural groups, with the additional factor of race later assuming enormous significance.

3. South African Baptist institutional developments.

An analysis of these structural developments is vital because, despite Baptist insistence on congregational government, decisions regarding the structures within the Baptist Union have had an enormous effect on its theological praxis. At least three periods of institutional development can be discerned, namely 1820-1892 (early beginnings); 1893-1977 (white control over the Baptist Union); and 1978-1991 (resistance to domination and privatization).

(a) Early Beginnings (1820-1892).

As much has already been said above concerning this period, only a few additional points require mention. The Baptist Union was officially constituted in 1877. By 1886, the ABK was accepted into membership with the Union. Thereafter, between 1888 and 1900, certain churches in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town reported work amongst the "coloured" people and in 1892, the South African Baptist Missionary Society (SABMS) was founded.[51] By the end of the 19th century, the stage was set for continued white domination over the doctrines, structures, missionary policies and aims of the Baptist Union.

(b) 1893-1977 : Baptist Union Control.

---

51. See C W Parnell, "The Detailed History", op cit, p 74.

This period of institutional development begins with the establishment of the SABMS in 1892 and ends with the centenary year of the establishment of the Baptist Union in 1977.

In 1902, a Rev T Rangiah of India had (on his own initiative and not that of the Union) arrived in South Africa to work in Natal. Only in 1923 was he accepted as a minister of the Union when the Indian Baptist Association (later the Natal Indian Baptist Association, NIBA) became affiliated with the SABMS.[52] In 1911, Sunday School work and the ministers' Pension Fund were begun. The following year, the Baptist Women's Association (BWA) was formed out of the existing Ladies League.

Between 1919 and 1968, the Baptist Union concentrated its efforts on evangelism, church growth, financial stability, ministerial training and administrative improvements.[53] But, by the late 1960's, Baptist leaders recognised that the Union was becoming unwieldy. In 1968 and 1976 committees were established to investigate the structures of the Union. Several years of discussion regarding the associations followed. Despite their efforts, in 1977, 14 Associations existed : seven territorial (Natal, Border, etc); two General Associations (the Men's and Women's Associations) and five "special" or linguistic and ethnic associations (the Afrikaans, Coloured, African ("Bantu") and two Indian Associations).[54] Again, in 1982, new structures were devised, without meaningful participation from black Baptists, and the problematic distinction between the special (now termed "general") and territorial associations remained.

In the light of the above, can the South African Baptist Union be regarded as a meaningful title? In a limited sense it was. Unity and "brotherly" love were certainly promoted within this Union of churches, and a number of scattered churches were brought together. The Union obtained trained pastors from overseas and delegated responsibility to its leaders to travel in pursuit of the establishment of new churches and the encouragement of old churches. These successes have been well documented in the writings of leading Baptist commentators such as Batts and Hudson-Reed. Unfortunately, the available evidence supports the view that "unity" was not understood to be a unity that transcended racial and cultural lines and, in this sense, the Baptist Union's aims of "unity, brotherly love and mutual

---

52. Ibid, p 86.

53. Ibid, pp 92-132.

54. Ibid, p 138.

assistance" were certainly not achieved. This is evidenced by the fact that, as late as 1975, no black churches were member churches within the Union itself, but fell under the jurisdiction of the SABMS.[55] In other words, South African social patterns of stratification were duplicated within church structures. Co-operation occurred between white Baptists, but relationships between white and black churches (including the African, Coloured and Indian congregations), were either non-existent or extremely circumscribed.[56]

A further comment can be made concerning the low status and dependent roles of women within the Baptist Union. In this area the Baptists were no different from the other denominations, and it is only recently that the feminist challenge has become effectively directed towards the churches in South Africa. Nevertheless, in view of the Baptist emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, their "non-sacramental" theology of ordination, and their belief in congregational government, their failure to include over half of their members in the Union's decision-making processes must be noted. It is interesting, for example, that whilst the Baptist Men's Association (BMA) was disbanded because of lack of interest, the Women's Association (BWA) went from strength to strength. The reasons for this were that men were already incorporated into the structures of the Union whilst the women committed themselves to the only avenue open to them, the BWA. In effect, consciously or unconsciously, women were recruited for service without the white, male power base being effected one iota.

Concerning the Baptist Union's institutional developments up to 1977, the following conclusions can be drawn. For over a century the Baptist Union grew slowly but steadily. Many churches were established and organisational structures were developed to meet the perceived needs of the member churches. During this period, as is shown in chapter six, the Baptist Union also engaged in evangelism, welfare, and medical and relief work amongst black South Africans. Nevertheless, these efforts were pursued on white terms according to a white agenda. This resulted in marked divisions along racial, class and gender lines. As an institution, the Baptist Union is seriously restricted with regard to its membership, leadership, organisational mechanisms and vision. This explains why it has been unable to transform itself so as to satisfy the genuine grievances of many black Baptists.

---

55. Cf Hudson-Reed, Together, p 135.

56. Cf (eds) Hoffmeister & Gurney, Barkly West, especially pp 24-67.

(c) 1978-1991 : Resistance to the Baptist Union.

The preceding section has shown that the structures of the Baptist Union enforced paternalistic relationships between "white" and "black" Baptists. But, during the 1980's, black Baptists (and some white Baptists) have broken away from these structures in a deliberate attempt to end this pattern of dominance. Three basic trends are discernible during this period. The first is the formal secession of the Transkei Baptist Union (TBU) in 1982. The second is the theological and political shift towards the left on the part of the FCB and the Baptist Convention, together with the structural separation of the Convention from the Union in 1987. The third, and less easily discernable, trend has been the way in which the Baptist Union has swung first to the right and then to the left in conformity with developments within the country. As all these events are discussed in some detail in chapter seven, only a few comments are required at this stage.

The formation of the FCB in 1986 and the breakaways of the TBU and the Baptist Convention in 1982 and 1987 respectively all form part of a pattern of resistance to the Baptist Union. By the 1980's there were many dissatisfactions, but no mechanisms existed within the Union through which these could be effectively addressed. In the late 1970's, a series of "merger" talks commenced between the leaders of the Convention and the Union, but these were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons, not least that they occurred within a context of long-standing dissatisfaction, frustration and insensitivity. Moreover, the Convention leaders were not prepared to merge with existing Baptist Union structures and the Union leaders refused to abandon their existing Constitution in order for a new, jointly formulated and approved Constitution to be drawn up. Eventually, the Convention withdrew from the talks in order to form an independent body and concentrate on developing their own policies and leaders.

The third trend that can be detected in the period 1978-1991 is that of confusion in Baptist Union circles concerning the socio-political function of the church. Those to the "right" of the political spectrum spoke out against what they perceived as the increased political consciousness of certain Baptists. Since the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and other groups in February 1990, however, the Baptist Union has produced a mild repudiation of Apartheid.

What conclusions, pertinent to the thesis, can be drawn from this brief sketch of Baptist institutional developments? Firstly, it appears that even before the turn of the century, there existed three distinct cultural and language groups within the Union, namely the English, German and Afrikaans

congregations. It is important to note that these distinctions were not racial or economic, nor did social and political differentiation play a significant role since all were members of the white population. This meant that they shared similar experiences and ideological commitments. However, these cultural and structural divisions set in motion a disastrous trend. Cultural separation became a racial separation, and the inequalities of the South African economy resulted in a further separation - that of class. Thus, the divisions of the 19th century became increasingly entrenched during the Apartheid dominated 20th century. Black and white Baptists lived in two different worlds; separated not only socially but also by the very structures of the Baptist Union. By concentrating on private, spiritual concerns and failing to apply their principles of unity and fellowship to the social realities surrounding them, Baptists were not only privatising the Gospel, they were creating divisions that would later destroy the fragile unity that characterised relations within the Baptist "Union".

4. South African Baptists' relationship to other South African churches, the Evangelical movement, and Baptists in other countries.

After the above discussion of the 16-18th century historical and theological roots of the Baptists, 19th century South African Baptist origins, and the significant institutional developments amongst South African Baptists since 1820, attention can now be given to the relationship between Baptists and other important ecclesiastical groups.

(a) English and Afrikaans speaking churches in South Africa.

The South African Baptist churches exhibit both similarities and dissimilarities when compared to the English speaking churches such as the Anglicans and Methodists on the one hand, and the Afrikaans speaking churches such as the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC or NGK) on the other.[57]

Unlike the English speaking churches, for example, the Baptist Union includes a large number of Afrikaans speaking members. Although, technically, these members make up an association within the Baptist Union, namely the ABK, it is not uncommon for Afrikaners to be members of "English" Baptist churches. Afrikaners have also held senior posts within the Baptist

---

57. For a detailed definition of these terms see C Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid (Cape Town : David Philip, 1988) pp 16-24. All the English speaking churches share the anomaly of regarding themselves as English speaking whilst having predominantly black memberships.

Union, including that of President. Because of their loyalty to their own "volk", they have undoubtably exercised a conservative political influence within the Baptist Union. Their existence has, thus, introduced additional cultural complexities and political allegiances into the already extremely diverse membership of the Baptist Union. Consequently, the Baptist Union leadership has been extremely reluctant to move beyond moderate political statements for fear of alienating this sector of their membership. As is argued in chapters six and seven, however, the Baptist Union has paid a heavy price in attempting to accommodate its conservative members (whether English or Afrikaans): it has lost the allegiance of the majority of its black members.

Another major difference between the Baptists and other English speaking churches is that of ecclesial structure. All Anglicans, for example, whether they are black or white, form part of a single entity called the Church of the Province of South Africa. Although differences of race and class certainly do exist at the level of the individual parish, at the Episcopal and Synodical levels there is no racial separation. For this reason, as black priests advanced (albeit slowly) up the educational and ecclesiastical ladder, they began to exert a proportionate influence on the church, bringing their own racial and class concerns to bear upon official church policies (eg concerning military conscription and economic sanctions).[58] A similar process has not occurred within the Baptist Union. Black efforts to win equality of status fell on deaf ears; even today white power remains firmly entrenched within the Baptist Union.

There are, however, also similarities between the South African Baptists and the English speaking churches. With the exception of its Afrikaans churches, English is the language employed as the medium of worship, theological education and in discussion at the annual Assemblies. The majority of white Baptists share with the English speaking churches many of their socio-cultural and ecclesiastical links with the "Home Country".

Even more significant are their shared socio-economic and political commitments. Virtually all of these churches can trace their origins back to the arrival of the 1820 settlers. The Methodists, for example, were also part and parcel of the colonial dispossession of the Xhosa people in the Eastern Cape. Subsequently, the English speaking churches verbally protested against the imposition of Apartheid but, in reality, they submitted to and even co-operated with the policies of white domination and black subjugation.

---

58. See Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid, pp 107-124.

The English speaking churches created racially separate Theological Colleges, submitted to the division of the Group Areas Act (although it virtually annihilated the Christian unity they preached) and paid their clergy according to racially disproportionate salary structures.

What, then, of the Afrikaans speaking churches? In relation to these churches, the Baptists (with the exception of their Afrikaans members) do not share the same allegiances to the Afrikaner volk, language, history and political parties. In terms of ecclesial structure, however, distinct similarities are evident. Like the Dutch Reformed Church, the Baptist Union separated its members according to racial categories not only at the level of individual congregations, but also at the level of national and regional Synods/Assemblies. Although in theory the racially separate associations were part of the Baptist Union, in practice, they closely resembled the separate institutions of the "African" Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Afrika (NGKA), the "Coloured" Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NSK) and the "Indian" Reformed Church in Africa (RCA). Black leadership and influence were restricted to black churches and had little or no bearing on Baptist Union policies, doctrines, structures or local church attitudes and activities. The DRC was, perhaps, more open in its relegation of its African, Coloured and Indian members to second-class Christian status, but the pattern of white theological, structural and financial control in the two churches was identical.

To summarise, in terms of their socio-cultural and historical affinities, the Baptist churches can be regarded as members of the English speaking churches. With respect to their ecclesial structures, however, they more closely resemble the Afrikaans speaking churches. Finally, in terms of ideological commitments to the perpetuation of white power, the white members of both the English and Afrikaans speaking churches are virtually indistinguishable. It is at this point that "spiritual" and theological unity are rigorously subordinated to cultural, class and gender interests. It is a tragic irony that within the churches that owe allegiance to a powerless, poor and crucified Saviour, the false citadels of middle and ruling class, white, male power are still so determinedly defended.

(b) South African Baptists and other Evangelicals.

South African Baptists within the Union readily identify themselves as Evangelicals. However, with regard to social issues in particular, they are

far less aware than other Evangelical groups in South Africa and overseas.[59] Two examples will have to suffice : the 1974 Lausanne Conference held in Switzerland, and the 1986 Evangelical Witness in South Africa (EWISA).

The 1974 Lausanne Conference was made up of a large gathering of Evangelicals all holding to broadly similar theological views. There was some evidence of disagreement between them as to the nature and extent of Christian social involvement.[60] Nevertheless, at Lausanne this significant Confession emerged :

> We have been partisan in our condemnation of totalitarianism and violence and have failed to condemn societal and institutionalised sin, especially that of racism.
>
> We have sometimes so identified ourselves with particular political systems that the Gospel has been compromised and the prophetic voice muted.
>
> We have sometimes distorted the Biblical understanding of man as a total being and have courted an unbiblical dualism.[61]

Even this relatively mild statement goes far beyond anything that has emerged from within the Baptist Union. Sin and salvation are still largely conceived of in purely personal terms and the Union reflects a white, middle-class captivity. Within white Baptist churches one hears little or nothing of the various forms of Contextual theology, such as the African, Black, Feminist and Liberation theologies. Whilst the Baptist Union has opposed certain forms of totalitarianism (e.g. the Fascism of Hitler), they have left the totalitarianism of the Nationalist Party untouched. By aiding and abetting the existence of racially separate churches, the Baptists have espoused the racism inherent in the system of Apartheid. Finally, as a result of an "unbiblical dualism" in which the soul and "spiritual" matters are elevated above the physical and secular, the prophetic voice of the Church has become muted. In all these ways, then, the Baptists indicate the extent to which they are propagating a privatised understanding of the Christian faith that is contrary to developments amongst certain other Evangelical groups.

---

59. See de Gruchy, "The Great Evangelical Reversal : South African Reflections" JTSA 24 (Sept 1978) pp 45-57 and D Walker, "'Radical Evangelicalism' : An expression of Evangelical Social Concern relevant to South Africa" JTSA 70 (1990) pp 37-46.

60. (ed) René C. Padilla, The New Face of Evangelicalism (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976) pp 87-102.

61. Ibid, pp 263-4.

Whilst several black Baptists signed the 1986 EWISA document, the names of Baptist Union leaders were conspicuously absent. Neither the Kairos Document nor EWISA have been formally discussed at Baptist Union Assemblies or openly propagated in local Baptist congregations country-wide. This certainly raises the question of the Baptist Union's own socio-political, cultural and economic views and their future relationship with the members of the FCB and the Baptist Convention. My own impression is that very few within the Union have seriously studied the writings of South African contextual theologians or faced their own moment of Kairos.

(c) South African Baptists and Baptists elsewhere.

During the 19th century, South African Baptists retained their links with British and German Baptists in Europe. Virtually all their pastors came from either England or Germany and the South Africans maintained their allegiance to a Euro-centric theology. During the 20th century, the German Baptist link decreased in importance and contact was first established, and later strengthened, with the largely conservative Southern Baptist Convention of the USA. Over the years, links between the South African and British Baptists have remained constant, but not intense. Much the same can be said for the relationship between local Baptists and the Baptist World Alliance.

In all these contacts, the white Baptist Union leadership has represented the South African Baptist community. Only very recently have the views of black Baptists, or any Baptists holding views contrary to the official Baptist Union representatives, been heard by Baptists in America, Europe, Africa, etc. This has certainly complicated relationships between Baptists in this country and Baptists elsewhere, since the voices emerging from within South Africa reflect different theological and social positions. Recent events have also given rise to the anomaly of South African Baptists being represented on the Baptist World Alliance by two separate bodies, the predominantly white Baptist Union and the predominantly black Baptist Convention of Southern Africa.

To sum up, it has been argued in this chapter that the notion of privatization is closely linked to the process of secularization defined as the declining social (or public) power of religion. In South Africa, because of the central role that religion has played, one cannot speak of a "religionless" society. However, it is valid to ask whose interests have been served by the privatised Gospel propagated by South African Baptists.

The dualism, individualism, spiritualization and lack of contextual analysis that are inherent in a privatised understanding of the Christian faith, have made it possible for white South African Baptists to live in a religiously created vacuum. Thus, they have established racially separate churches and white dominated ecclesiastical structures despite their theological adherence to the Christian principles of justice, fellowship and unity. This has meant that white Baptists have been increasingly faced with resistance from within their own ranks to both their privatised theology and the disparity between what they preach and what they practice. Hence the establishment of the FCB and the breakaway of the Baptist Convention. Finally, the dominant, white model of what it means to be a Baptist and an Evangelical is increasingly being challenged by radical Evangelicalism both within the country and overseas.

With this preliminary sketch of privatization and the South African Baptists in mind, attention can be turned in the next chapter to the methodological principles which underpin this thesis. Thereafter, the causes and consequences of privatization are traced in order to discover the reasons why South African Baptists, although they believe in "one faith, one Lord and one baptism", are deeply divided by race, class, culture and gender.

****

CHAPTER 2

THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS AND PRIVATIZATION : METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES.

In the previous chapter, the notion of privatization was developed and the term "the South African Baptists" elucidated. The purpose of this chapter is to outline and defend the three methodological approaches employed in this thesis. These three approaches, namely sociological, historical and theological, must not be conceived of as entirely separate. Theology should not be artificially separated from sociology or history but rather interrelated with these, and other, disciplines. The Reformation, to use but one example, has been the subject of interest for social scientists, historians and theologians. Having stressed the importance of integration it is necessary, for ease of argument, to subdivide the various methodologies into three major categories. Thus, the first major section deals with the social context of religion in which the meaning of this phrase is defined; the social functions of religion discussed; the importance of ideology noted; and the various social analyses employed in this study (ie race, class, culture and gender) are outlined. The next section is concerned with historical method. Here various historiographies are discussed : traditional South African Baptist; "secular" South African historiography; ecclesiastical historiography; and, finally, my own historical methodology and use of sources. The third section, namely theological methodology, deals with the importance of context for Biblical interpretation; the value of Contextual Theology in identifying the privatised elements of the Baptist tradition; the rise of Contextual Theologies in South Africa; and, finally, the importance of Contextual Theology for South African Baptists.

This integrated and multi-disciplinary methodology is vital to this thesis (and arguably to theology as a whole), because the theological praxis of the Christian faith cannot be isolated from the psychological and social context in which it exists. Further, it is my conviction that the privatised theology of the South African Baptists is a consequence of their failure to take seriously the social roots of religious convictions. The reverse is also true, because of its privatised theology, Baptists have found it difficult to respond creatively to the social context in which they live. Thus, whilst this thesis certainly does not seek to reduce religion to social factors, it incorporates several of the insights of the social sciences.

The historical emphasis throughout this thesis is also important because, as both sociology and psychology teach us, in understanding one's roots, one can better understand oneself. This is equally true of religious groups such as the Baptists even though they cannot trace their ancestry from a single event, personality or monolithic set of doctrines. Consequently, the various Baptist traditions, as well as the circumstances that gave rise to these traditions, need to be traced and their link with the emergence of privatization revealed. Although this study could be described as a "denominational history" it differs from traditional approaches to South African Baptist history in that it incorporates the insights of the sociology of religion, so-called "secular" history and a range of theological insights (drawn mainly from Biblical Hermeneutics, Systematic Theology, Ethics and Missiology). But more of this later.

When speaking of the past, a rational analysis of the conscious and material realm of human experience is vital, but, inadequate on its own. Historical events and processes which, as in the case of South Africa, include conquest and domination, give rise to complex emotions such as arrogance, paternalism and guilt on the part of the oppressors and resentment, anger, withdrawal, frustration and suspicion on the part of the oppressed. Unless these unconscious drives are acknowledged and brought out into the open, they become the hidden, but powerful, forces which control personal, ecclesiastical and social experience.

Bearing in mind that no analysis can be value-free, this study is self-consciously conducted from within a Christian perspective. This means that it takes seriously the doctrinal formulations of the Baptists as well as recognising the supernatural and prophetic elements of the Christian faith, neither of which should be reduced to social causality. But, to take up a position within a Baptist framework does not mean that blind loyalty is the only possible expression of Christian commitment. On the contrary, this thesis is critical of many of the manifestations of Baptist theological praxis in South Africa. As a critical and contextual theology, then, this study seeks to analyse the South African Baptist tradition as it exists today and to point towards a renewal of the Baptist vision within the contemporary South African scene. In my view, the question that faces South African Baptists is this : can the classic Baptist theological traditions be experienced and re-interpreted in such a way that this presently largely privatised denomination can be a vital part of a just and creative transformation of its own churches as well as South African society? Or is

the Baptist faith so encapsulated in a privatised model, that Baptists can only watch developments from the sidelines of history?

A. PRIVATIZATION AND THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF RELIGION.

This thesis is neither purely nor specifically a sociological study, but it does seek to incorporate certain insights of the social sciences, particularly those concerning the social function of religion, religion and ideology, and the social analyses of class, race, culture and gender. But, before an analysis of these can be embarked upon, the phrase "the social context of religion" requires definition.

1. What is the Social Context of Religion?

In seeking to identify the social context of religion, the insights of the sociology of religion are extremely helpful. Technically speaking, the sociology of religion is a branch of sociology. Such a statement, however, belies the importance of religion within sociological investigations. The founders of sociology (such as Comte, Durkheim, Marx and Weber) were profoundly interested in the role and influence of religion. At its simplest, sociology can be defined as "the systematic study of human social reality", the sociology of religion, therefore, is the study of the function of religion in society.

This preliminary definition is, however, too simplistic in that it assumes that the terms "society" and "religion" and even the "function" of religion are universally understood. In fact, sociologists themselves have themselves been deeply divided with respect to how they understand social realities such as individuality, authority, power, change, secularization, tradition, etc. According to the functionalist approach, for example, "religion is but one form of institutionalized human behaviour" and the question that must be asked is :

> ...what are the functions, manifest and latent, of religious institutions in maintaining the equilibrium of the social system as a whole?[1]

---

1. T O Dea, The Sociology of Religion (Engelwood Cliffs : Prentice Hall, 1966) pp 2-3.

By way of contrast, Otto Maduro notes that a sociological definition of religion "is a definition of religion as a social phenomenon" but goes on to say that he regards this social manifestation of religion as but one dimension of the totality of religion.[2]

It is apparent, therefore, that sociologists have different views concerning the social manifestations of religion. These are influenced, naturally enough, by their perceptions of religion and the nature of social reality. The importance of the sociology of religion for this thesis is that its various proponents can assist in the attempt to unravel how and why the Baptist tradition developed a privatised theological praxis. A further reason for this sociological analysis is the effect of secularization. As religion has increasingly been pushed to the social periphery, churches such as the Baptists have responded by withdrawing into the realm of individualistic spirituality. As is argued below, however, because of its inherent dualism and spiritualization, this form of spirituality is, at the very least, a dilution of the Christian Gospel. Consequently, even the Baptist emphasis on personal spiritual growth has failed to bear fruit consistently. In both psychological and sociological terms, then, Baptist spirituality is vulnerable to critique.

Helpful though the sociology of religion is, its analyses can usefully be complemented by other fields of study. This is because the classic models of the sociology of religion have been formulated within a Western (and, more recently, Latin American) rather than an African context. In addition, the vast majority of sociological studies have emphasised the category of class. Within the South African context, class analysis, though vital, needs to be complemented with analyses of race, culture and gender. This is not to say that these categories have been absent in sociological writings, but simply to make the point that insights from other social sciences, such as anthropology, as well as studies on race and gender, need to be taken into account.

Now that the phrase "the social context of religion" has been briefly defined, attention can be turned to a consideration of some of the classic models of the social function of religion.

2. The Social Function of Religion.

The value of the sociology of religion as a methodological approach for this thesis lies in the fact that it can assist in the task of elucidating

---

2. O Maduro, Religion and Social Conflicts (Maryknoll : Orbis, 1982) p 15.

both the manifest and latent functions of the South African Baptist tradition. Manifest functions are those identified by the religious adherents themselves (eg the need for salvation), whilst latent functions are those identified by sociologists (eg social cohesion, control or change). Within existing South African Baptist literature, it is the manifest rather than latent functions that are stressed. Such an approach is inadequate since it only reveals a portion of the actual function of Baptist religious understanding and experience.

Within the sociology of religion, three main models concerning the social function of religion are to be found. These include Durkheim's analysis of religion in terms of its function of maintaining social cohesion; Marx's perception of religion as a means of social control in which religion is the legitimating ideology of the ruling classes and the opiate of the people; and Weber's perception that religion can function as an innovative and creative mechanism of social change.[3]

(a) Emile Durkheim : Religion and Social Cohesion.

Durkheim's work centred on the power of religion to act as a socially binding force.[4] Though he tended to reduce both God and religion to their social functions (which subsequently gave rise to the Functionalist school) his perception of religion was an inherently positive one. Religion was, for Durkheim, an expression of a social need for security and meaning.

Durkheim's view is relevant to the South African Baptists in at least three ways. Firstly, it explains why the Lutherans, Calvinists and Catholics all combined to rid themselves of the threat that the Anabaptist insistence on the separation of Church and State presented to the (already damaged) Medieval unity of Europe. Secondly, and closer to home, because his work centred on the religious forms of fairly static communities such as the Australian Aborigines, Durkheim's analysis can help to explain the resistance of 19th century traditional African societies to the preaching of Christians; they were perfectly aware that this new social and religious system was a threat to their traditional identity, cohesion and power. Thirdly, his approach draws attention to the way in which the religious faith of the

3. More recent and sophisticated additions to these classic views, can be found IN (eds) R Bocock & K Thompson, Religion and Ideology (Manchester : University Press, 1985) p 127 ff.

4. Re Durkheim see (eds) R Bocock & K Thompson, ibid, pp 41-58.

established for blacks at Debe Nek. Thus they were not provided with the theological means to emerge from their dependency; rather, they were actively discouraged from questioning the status quo (within both the Baptist churches and South African society). The type of theological praxis that was encouraged by the leaders of the Baptist Union resulted in a form of religious experience that was, indeed, a social narcotic. As Marx so emotively expresses it :

> Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.(6)

What were the psychological effects of this authoritarian type of religion? According to Gregory Baum, authoritarian religion (which is characterised by control) makes people dependent, passive and uncritical. Being led by authoritarian leaders, such believers "...feel safe only in social, political and ecclesiastical institutions where few decisions are demanded of them."(7). Arguably, this description is applicable to many within the Baptist Union.

Nevertheless, Marx's critique of religion, though painfully accurate in some cases, is flawed and incomplete.(8) This emerges immediately below in the discussion of Weber's understanding of the social function of religion.

(c) Max Weber : Religion and Social Change.

Weber revealed the intimate connection between the religious doctrines of the Puritans (ascetic Protestantism) and their determined efforts in the realms of science and business.(9) He argued that they perceived it as their calling to evidence their salvation in secular pursuits. No longer was

---

6. Marx, "Contribution to the critique of Hegel's philosophy of right" (1844) IN (eds) Bocock & Thompson, ibid, p 11.

7. G Baum, Religion and Alienation (New York : Paulist Press, 1975) p 93. See also the discussion of infantile and institutionalised religion in G Hughes, God of Surprises (London : Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985) pp 16-23.

8. See Roger A Johnson, et al (eds) Critical Issues in Modern Religion (Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973) pp 143-247.

9. M Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (London : Unwin Hyman, 1930) pp 95-154.

retreat to the cloistered world the ideal, rather, God was to be served in the world; and this passion gave rise to the entrepreneur and the Protestant work ethic.[10] Weber also produced a devastating critique of the bondage (the "iron cage") produced in modern Western society as a consequence of the social processes of rationalisation and bureaucratisation. Within such a context, he argued, certain types of religious believers can bring about social renewal and transformation. Not those believers conditioned and domesticated by this "iron cage", but the religious adherents of the marginalised groups who are able to hear the voices of the prophets amongst them. Through such charismatic agents the creative energies necessary for social transformation can emerge.[11]

Weber's analysis of the social function of religion was more nuanced than that of Marx. He recognised that religion performed different functions at different periods in history according to the social class of its adherents.[12] In agreement with Marx, he noted that religion functioned, at times, in a repressive manner. But he was also aware of the creative function of religion. In short, he stressed the ambiguity of religion.

This means that the Marxist view of the social function of religion is a one-sided view. The present revolt on the part of some black Baptists is not a rejection of religion, but a conscious utilization and revision of their religious faith to achieve the dignity and power so long denied to them. As Weber argued, this type of prophetic religion which emerges from the marginalised classes, can be a significant force of religious and social transformation. The significance of this is borne out by Baum's point that a positive aspect of the multi-faceted alienation of which Marx speaks is often neglected. Since certain people are marginalised, they do not become totally identified with the social order and are, thus, in a position to transcend and criticise it. Hence, "prophecy" says Baum "is possible only amongst the alienated".[13]

Subsequent chapters show within which contexts the Baptists propagated a faith that either challenged or transformed social reality (eg the 16th century Anabaptists, certain English Baptists and contemporary groups within

---

10. B Wilson, Religion in Sociological Perspective (OUP, 1982) pp 75-77.

11. See Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid pp 183-189.

12. See G Baum, Religion and Alienation p 37 and (eds) Bocock & Thompson, op cit, pp 21-30.

13. Baum, ibid, p 31.

the FCB and Baptist Convention) or which withdrew and, thereby, legitimated social realities (eg the dominant South African Baptist tradition).

3. Theology and Ideology.

At the outset, it is necessary to define what is meant by the term "ideology". Such a task is complicated by the fact that this term is used in a variety of ways. James Leatt and Klaus Nürnberger have produced a useful discussion on the various meanings of the term ideology and the relationship between ideology and theology.[14] They point out that the term has been widely used within positivist and Marxist schools of thought as well as within the field of the sociology of knowledge. Within positivism, the term is used in a neutral sense so as to mean particular "mind-sets". The problem with such a perception is, however, that it wrongly presumes the possibility of "value-free" paradigms. Marx used the term in a variety of ways, but emphasised both that ideas are a reflection of the economic base of society and that the "ideas of the ruling class are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas".[15] In such a context, ideology is understood in a largely negative and pejorative manner :

> For Marx ideology is not a value-free framework of thought. Ideology is a distortion of truth in the interests of the ruling classes by which their own position is legitimated.[16]

Another perspective on ideology is that of Gramsci who speaks of the many layers of ideologies reflected by persons and groups. In his view, ideological formulation is itself a "site of contestation and struggle"; ideological formulations are not static.[17] From within an anthropological perspective, C Geertz, has pointed out that there are two main views regarding the nature of ideologies : the interest theory (according to which ideology is "a mask and a weapon") and the strain theory (according to which ideology is "a symptom and a remedy").[18] He goes on to say that these two theories are not mutually exclusive, they are responses

---

14. Cf (eds) J Leatt & K Nürnberger, Contending Ideologies in South Africa pp 273-302.

15. Ibid, p 274.

16. Baum, op cit, p 34.

17. Cf (eds) Bocock & Thompson, op cit, p 128.

18. Ibid, p 76.

to both societal competition and dysfunction. The strain theory is more nuanced and complex since it takes into account the economic as well as the social, emotional and symbolic elements of human interaction. Therefore, says Geertz, it is necessary to trace "the modes of interpenetration of culture, personality, and social system".[19]

If by ideology one means a world-view or mind-set, Christianity is an ideology. When a single group of Christians seeks to formulate Christian doctrine or define the role of the Church within the social context, almost inevitably the particular interests and thought forms (or ideological commitments) of that group are reflected in their theological formulations. This explains why, within South Africa, ideologies such as Nationalism, liberalism, Marxism, capitalism and racism have often been undergirded by religious justifications. In this process, groups have sought to justify a position of power (or desire for power) on the basis of racial superiority, class position, moral right, etc. Significantly,

> Ideology as a mechanism of self-justification can create the collective illusion of legitimacy and acceptability; ideally this illusion is also shared by a considerable part of the dominated groups, thereby ensuring the cohesion and credibility of the dominant parties.[20]

Thus, ideologies are forms of false consciousness as well as expressions of political and economic interests. Furthermore, as Geertz reminds us, ideologies are not restricted to economic interests, they also reflect socio-cultural, emotional and symbolic realities and the stresses and strains resulting from these realities.

Religious believers (and especially religious groups) are constantly tempted to abuse their faith to satisfy political and economic interests. Whereas the collaboration of the Afrikaans speaking churches with Apartheid is the clearest example of this religious legitimation of group interest, the conformism of the English speaking churches (including the Baptists) with white domination means that they must share the collective guilt of white South Africans. Even the present-day emphasis on "a just, non-racial and democratic South Africa" contains the possibility of ideological manipulation of the uncritical, uninformed and intellectually lazy public. The Christian churches, precisely because their adherents represent such a range of social interests, are in a position to experience at first hand (and, hopefully,

---

19. Ibid, p 80.

20. (eds) Leatt & Nürnberger, op cit, p 283.

learn from) the ideological struggles within their own ranks. What is called for, then, is "epistemological vigilance" and a degree of awareness of ideological influence that precludes (or, at least, restricts) ideological captivity.

Is such a thing possible? Pillay has argued that it is because ideological commitments are neither immutable nor socially determined :

> The nature of the shift from one belief-system to another is far more historically complex than those who define ideology as germane to human thought and behaviour realise. They make all commitment or biases the equivalent of ideology. To make an ideology all pervasive is to remove the possibility of any real critical self-reflection or any possibility of change.[21]

If this is true, believers can escape (albeit partially) from the limitations of their background or group interests and develop new religious perceptions and structures. This is important for this thesis precisely because I want to establish if (and how) the South African Baptists can draw upon their rich theological heritage and heal the wounds inflicted since the colonial period (by means of genuine repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, restitution, etc). Can Baptists build a genuine form of unity across racial, cultural, gender and class lines? Finally, can we develop a theological praxis that can make a worthwhile contribution to present South African socio-cultural, economic, political and ecclesiastical struggles?

4. Race, Class, Culture and Gender.

In the introduction to this chapter, it is stated that in analysing the "social context of religion", it is necessary to take into account not only the category of class, but also the categories of race, culture and gender. In this section, all four are mentioned but they are not given equal space. In keeping with the integrated and multi-disciplinary nature of this thesis, the category of class receives more attention immediately below, whilst those of race, culture and gender are discussed in more detail in the historiographical and theological sub-sections of this chapter.

During this century several theologians, influenced by the writers already discussed, wrote significant class analyses of Christian churches. For example, in 1932 Reinhold Niebuhr wrote Moral Man and Immoral

---

21. G Pillay, "Theology and the Fanaticised Consciousness " (Inaugural lecture published in Theologia Evangelica 24:3 (Sept 1991) p 6.

Society.[22] This classic is important for this thesis precisely because it explains a phenomena that is very prevalent within Baptist circles, namely the existence of moral individuals who, once they form part of a social group, fail to apply their personal morality to social affairs because they perceive (consciously or unconsciously) that the interests of their group would be threatened by such an action. He puts it like this :

> As individuals, men believe that they ought to love and serve each other and establish justice between each other. As racial, economic and national groups they take for themselves whatever their power can command.[23]

Thus, the "owning classes" seek to maintain their privileged positions and only abandon (or limit) these when compelled to do so. For this reason, trust in individual morality is inadequate to ensure the removal of injustice. Without political realism and workable strategies, the entrenched power and legitimations of the dominant classes will not be successfully challenged.[24] These perceptions expose the reasons for the ineffectual nature of the Baptist social critique of Apartheid (discussed in chapter six). Because these critiques largely emerged from middle-class white Baptists, and because they did not include deliberate strategies but relied on the religious convictions of individuals, they failed to challenge the power base of the government in any perceptible way.

The Social Sources of Denominationalism by Reinhold's brother, Richard H Niebuhr, is also a valuable source since it stresses the social conditions within which new religious movements (such as the 16th century Anabaptists and the 17th century English Baptists) emerged.[25] Richard Niebuhr also stresses the individualistic way in which religion is understood within middle-class milieus :

> Sin is not so much a state of soul as a deed or a characteristic; it is not so much the evil with which the whole social life and

---

22. R Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society (New York : Scribners, 1932/1960). The ground work for this and other studies was laid by the extensive analysis of Ernest Troeltsch's The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches Vols 1 & 2 (Chicago : University Press, 1911/1960).

23. Ibid, p 9.

24. Ibid, pp 117, 164.

25. The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York : New American Library, 1929/1957).

> structure is infected as it is the personal failure of the individual.[26]

Because sin and salvation are understood in this individualistic way, religious persons are empowered to express their convictions in their pursuit for personal holiness and individual enterprise. But this bourgeois form of religion, precisely because its members are socially comfortable, seldom produces a "passion for social justice".[27] Again, the correlation between this analysis and the concerns of the dominant (white, middle-class) Baptist tradition is remarkable. In short, an analysis that can successfully penetrate to the root of the Baptists' privatised conception of the Christian faith cannot exclude a class analysis of the members of South African Baptist churches.

But class analyses, though vital, are inadequate on their own. Baum points out that Marx was preoccupied with economic and political structures and virtually ignored psychological, cultural and symbolic structures.[28] Arguably, this is a trend that has largely been perpetuated by the neo-Marxists. In recent years, however, this emphasis on the economic base of society has been questioned or, at least, complemented. Thus, the American anthropologists, Jean and John Comaroff, have produced a number of fascinating studies on the Colonial process in South Africa in which the complex and interwoven nature of class, gender, politics, economics, and cultural, racial and religious factors are revealed. Thus, quoting a literature review by Ranger, they state that :

> An oddity of most recent historiography of early mission Christianity is that it has greatly overplayed the manifest political and economic factors in its expansion and greatly underplayed the cultural and religious... [even the formal church historians have] hardly discussed the impact of missionaries and their African catechists on the cultural imagination of Africa.[29]

---

26. Ibid, p 85.

27. Ibid, p 87.

28. G Baum, op cit, p 21. Baum's fascinating study combines economic and political analyses with an evaluation of psychology and symbolism. See also Helena L Glanville, "Postmodern thought in the light of Women's Existence" (Unpublished paper read at the Theological Society Conference, 1991) pp 1-28.

29. J & J Comaroff, "Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa" American Ethnologist 13 (1986) p 1.

Elsewhere, the Comaroffs note the importance of elucidating the "colonization of consciousness and the consciousness of colonization" and show that an essential aspect of the power struggle between the colonists and the indigenous people (in this case the southern Tswana) was the struggle over power and meaning.[30] In this article they show that this struggle was reflected, for example, in the conflicts over water, agricultural techniques and language. In this process, the missionaries played a vital role in assisting in the colonization of the traditional thought-forms, power relations (including gender relations), and economic production of the Tswana. This, in turn, facilitated the subsequent incorporation of these people into the capitalist economy of the country. Not on the basis of equality, as the missionaries had hoped, but within the racial domination that was (and still is) such an essential aspect of South African existence.[31]

Whilst the Comaroffs do note the extent to which these nonconformist missionaries were influenced by their own class origins and identification with British imperialism, they do not develop their perception of the inherent dualism of the missionary's vision.[32] In my view, it was precisely because of the dualistic theology of the 19th century missionaries that they were unable to question their own ideological commitments (eg adherence to British perceptions of the value of Empire and bourgeois values concerning hard work and the subjugation of nature by rational means). Nor were they able to appreciate fully the consciousness of the African peoples which rested on the inherent unity of life. Thus their distinction between the "political" and "religious" rendered them captive to their own ideological commitments, causing them to seek means of breaking down what they perceived as the "devilish, pagan or barbaric" practices of the "heathen". By encouraging the Africans to internalise the values of missionary ideology, the missionaries sundered the unity of the traditional world and made it extremely vulnerable to the depredations of racist capitalism at the levels of both internalised consciousness and economic coercion.

---

30. J & J Comaroff, "The Colonization of Consciousness in South Africa" Economy and Society 18:3 (1989) pp 267-296.

31. Comaroff, "Christianity and colonialism in South Africa" op cit p 18.

32. Ibid pp 5 & 20.

To conclude this discussion on the social context of religion, it can be seen that an analysis of the social function of religion, the influence of ideology on theological praxis and the role played by class, race, culture and gender are vital to this thesis. Without these tools, an adequate analysis of how and why the South African Baptists developed a privatised view of the Christian faith (and the consequences of this diluted faith) will be impossible.

B. HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS.

In order to understand the present theological praxis of the Baptists, it is vital to discover the origins and development of the doctrine, church practices and missionary policies of this denomination. Further, in seeking to grasp the nature of Baptist social ethics, an analysis of the interrelation between these churches and their context, both historical and contemporary, is essential.

Although this task of historical analysis may seem a simple one, its execution is rather complex. In the following pages, it is necessary firstly to outline the way in which South African Baptist historiography is traditionally pursued. Secondly, to note the challenge posed by 20th century developments in South African historiography and, thirdly, to state what the strengths and weaknesses of South African church histories are. In the fourth subsection, the specific historical methodology employed in this analysis of the South African Baptists is outlined and defended. Finally, some comments are made concerning the use of sources.

1. Traditional approaches to South African Baptist historiography.

Traditional South African Baptist histories, such as those written (or edited) by H J Batts and S Hudson-Reed, have adopted a common approach. In the introduction to his History of the Baptist Church in South Africa, Batts writes:

> This is but a simple story, and little more than a plain record of the facts as they have been collected ... the chief aim being

> to give a correct record of the Church's rise and progress in the period under review.[33]

Whilst it has been said that hindsight is always an exact science, it could be argued that Batts does not appear to realise that the task of plainly recording the facts is a virtually impossible one. Certainly, Batts was personally involved in many of the events that he records and the fledgling church no doubt benefitted from his record of the establishment of a great many churches. Nevertheless, an analysis of his book reveals a number of vital flaws. Batts does not discuss, indeed he seldom even mentions, the context within which these Baptist churches took root and flourished. Colonialism, the white conquest of the land, the discovery of gold and diamonds, and even the South African War of 1899-1902 are not seriously considered in relation to the Baptist witness. Similar comments can be made with regard to By Taking Heed : the History of the Baptists in Southern Africa 1820-1977 and Together for a Century edited or written by Hudson-Reed. Whilst these books undoubtably contain an enormous amount of detail and bear signs of extensive primary research, they do not rigorously discuss the Baptist churches in their socio-political and economic contexts. Further, when comments are made in relation to this context, a settler perspective (defined below) is revealed. For example, in his treatment of the origins of the Kariega church Hudson-Reed states :

> The Kariega farmers were building their church, anticipating the joy of its completion ... then suddenly on the 21st of December 1834, 15000 Gaikas and Galekas poured into the settlement. The assegai was over every hill and the result of fourteen years arduous toil was destroyed. Soon scores of homesteads were burning, widows and their fatherless children were huddling together in Grahamstown and the invaders were driving away thousands of head of cattle.[34]

In this quotation, the settlers are regarded as the victims of invasion and theft, but the issue of how the land came to be settled in the first place is not discussed. Similarly, in By Taking Heed, which deals with the period 1820-1977, crucial matters such as the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 or the coming to power of the Nationalists in 1948, together with the draconian laws

---

33. Batts, The History of the Baptist Church of South Africa (Cape Town : Maschew Miller, c1920) p (i).

34. Hudson-Reed, Together, p 14. The same criticisms can be directed towards the many publications of the SA Baptist Historical Society and the various Church Centenary Documents.

they enforced upon the population, are not analysed in relation to the ministry and mission of the Baptists in South Africa.

In addition, the social and theological background of these writers, which undoubtably influenced their selection and interpretation of the available data, is not taken into account. Nor is there a concerted effort to obtain data about the black Baptists even though, by 1977, blacks constituted over half of the entire Baptist membership. It was assumed that the white Baptist tradition was the Baptist voice and that the interpretations of this group were valid for the Baptist churches in South Africa as a whole.

2. An overview of 20th century South African historical methodology.

C Saunders, in his The Making of the South African Past has provided an extremely useful overview of recent South African historiography.[35] He begins by discussing the settler tradition which was established by G M Theal. This approach was pro-settler and anti-black in its orientation. Whites were regarded as superior to the indigenous population in every way, they had brought with them the benefits of civilization, and they were, in the Darwinian sense, a superior race. Not only was this tradition negative towards African history and culture, but it also perpetuated the myth that whites and blacks had arrived in the sub-continent simultaneously. This paradigm justified the settlement of whites and their subjugation of the blacks and it established a racist interpretation of South African history.[36] Despite the fact that Theal wrote between 1871-1913, it is shown in chapter five that some recent Baptist writings concerning the 19th century border conflicts still adopt this settler paradigm.

Theal's methodology was challenged by Macmillan and de Kiewiet between 1920 and 1960. Unlike the liberals of the 1950's and 1960's, these two scholars paid particular attention to the economic factors within South African history. Their work included analyses of both black and white poverty and the development of the South African economy. Further, they challenged the settler paradigm and the myth of an "empty" interior into which whites moved unchallenged by black inhabitants. Whilst these scholars

---

35. C Saunders, The Making of the South African Past (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988).

36. Saunders, ibid, pp 9-44.

have been criticised by the revisionists, for example, for their generalisations concerning blacks, they blazed a trail within South African historical research that was only developed decades later. Further, in sharp contrast to the segregationist approach of their contemporaries, they proposed that the qualified franchise be extended to blacks and that all the inhabitants of South Africa should be enabled to share in the development and government of the country.(37)

The next few decades saw the development of the liberal school (eg E Walker of UCT), early radical writers (such as Marquard and Eddie Roux), and the liberal Africanists (eg Leonard Thompson, Monica Wilson, Archie Mafeje). It was as a result of the efforts of the latter group that the influential Oxford History of 1969 and 1971 emerged.(38) But, for the purposes of this thesis, the most significant development was the rise of the revisionist school in the 1970's.

Whilst other scholars had contributed to the development of this approach, the revisionists proposed a radical revision of historical methodology. The members of this school of thought (eg Martin Legassick, S Marks, A Atmore, D O'Meara, S Trapido) differed amongst each other on a variety of matters, but they were agreed that much greater attention needed to be given to economic matters. They believed that there was an inescapable link between capitalism, segregation and Apartheid. Political and social developments in South Africa could not be viewed in isolation from the discoveries of diamonds and gold, industrialisation and urbanisation. Race could not be isolated from class, and politics could not be separated from the material base of the dominant classes. This Marxist emphasis on the material base of society sometimes included negative perceptions of religion and the reduction of religion to an epiphenomenon, but not all revisionists adopted this stance.(39) The revisionists also stressed that history should be pursued "from below", that is, from the perspective of the oppressed and marginalised groups within society. Historical research, as defined and pursued by privileged whites, needed to be radically corrected by those who suffered as a consequence of racist and economic oppression. In view of this emphasis on the marginalised, it is significant that it was only in the late 1970's, after an extended debate on the relative importance

---

37. Ibid, pp 47-94.

38. Ibid, 143-161.

39. See G Pillay, "Theology and the Fanaticised Consciousness" op cit, p 5.

of the categories of race and class, that gender issues began to receive attention.[40] Women, the most marginalised group in history, were beginning actively and systematically to question the dominant male paradigm.

But what has been the response of Baptists to these challenges? As far as I have been able to ascertain, there has been little or no reaction. Several possible reasons for this state of affairs can be cited. One is that Baptist church historians believe that these debates are irrelevant to the writing of Baptist history. If this is so, this attitude reflects an intellectual form of "disengagement". Another possible reason is that Baptist writers are simply unaware of the above debate because many of the Baptist literary sources (eg church magazines, Assembly Handbooks, Centenary pamphlets, etc) are produced by persons who are not professional historians or academics. Few Baptist pastors in South Africa have had a university education and the Baptist Theological Colleges, sadly, do not appear to have addressed the issue of historical interpretation in any determined way. In short, Baptist writings are pursued largely in a vacuum and, when they do make historical comments, they adopt either a settler or liberal perspective. Thus, a chasm exists between Baptist historical writing and present day historical research. This is an omission which this thesis seeks in part to remedy.

Of what relevance, then, are the revisionist school's ideas for the historical dimension of this thesis. The revisionist challenge is significant because it underlines the fact that denominational history should not be pursued in isolation from economic (or any other) structures. Further, Baptist history cannot simply be undertaken from a white perspective. The actual effect of Baptist Union mission policies on the lives of black Baptists, for example, cannot be analysed simply on the basis of the good intentions of the white missionaries or financial donors. Black Baptists need to express their own perceptions and relate their own experiences of Baptist Union mission work, not least because the views of those on the receiving end of these efforts do, in fact, often differ considerably from the reports given by whites. This was abundantly borne out in the discussions and published record of the Baptist Convention's Awareness Campaign held in 1990.[41]

---

40. Saunders, op cit, 165-191.

41. Cf Hoffmeister & Gurney (eds), Barkly West, especially pp 33-69.

3. South African Church histories : their strengths and weaknesses.

To begin with, the question whether the distinction between "secular" and "church" history is valid must be asked. C W Cook has argued that church history cannot be separated from the rest of history.[42] He further notes that the more acute analyses of the South African churches have been undertaken by "secular" rather than "church" historians. Along similar lines, Nicholas Southey criticised South African church historians as follows:

> While it may be a truism to state that the history of the church is intimately bound up with the history of the society in which it is grounded, the writings of many of the historians of the churches in South Africa often fail to reflect adequately this important point.[43]

These statements indicate that a degree of rivalry, even antagonism, exists between historians within the Arts/Social Sciences and Theological faculties.[44] But, is it valid to make a distinction between "secular" and "church" history?

This question can be answered both negatively and positively. The two cannot be isolated from each other because religious experience cannot be separated from the rest of human experience, particularly because religious beliefs have had a major impact on society. Further, it is one of the contentions of this thesis that the strict separation between secular and religious categories is a result of the process of secularization. Whilst modern churches may not wish, for example, to return to the structural interconnection between Church and State which pertained during the Middle Ages, it is quite another matter for the Church to embrace privatization by abandoning the "secular" realm and retreating into a spiritual ghetto. In short, if the word "secular" means the material social context, church history has no validity if it is pursued in isolation from secular history.

On the other hand, if the word "secular" refers to the philosophies of secularism, positivism, materialism and atheism, for example, then church history must be distinguished from secular history. By definition, church

---

42. C W Cook, "The writing of South African church history : an appraisal of the English speaking Traditions" in South African Historical Journal 2 (1970) p 107.

43. N Southey, "History, Church History and Historical Theology in South Africa" JTSA 68 (1989) p 5.

44. Ibid, pp 5ff.

(or religious) history seeks to explore both the supernatural and material dimensions of theological praxis. Contrary to Durkheim and the functionalist approach, the church historian does not reduce religion (or God) to social needs, although the social dimensions of religion need to be readily admitted.

Having established, then, that church histories (or denominational histories) are a distinct and valid academic enterprise - as long as they are not undertaken in isolation from general historical studies - attention can now be given to the question of how such histories can best be undertaken.

N Southey has summarised the following criticisms of South African church histories.[45] Church history is all too often apologetic and polemic in its orientation,[46] and it is often culturally restricted, ethically bound and geographically narrowly based.[47] For this reason, it needs to be more ecumenical (Cook) and include a specifically black perspective (Brown).[48] Southey goes on to say that church history needs to engage in debate with the "wider historical profession". He is not opposed to denominational histories as such, rather he is extremely critical of certain types of denominational history, namely, those that suffer from polemicism, cultural or ethnic restrictions and those which are so introspective that they do not take into account the broader context within which they operate.

In addition to the limitations just cited, church historiography, like any other discipline, is open to ideological influence and, when this is unconscious, ideological control. Concerning ideological determinants, G Pillay says :

> The influence of one's historical inheritance on one's thinking is more pervasive than scholars imagine and creates, often

---

45. Southey, op cit, p 10. He cites the works of F A van Jaarsveld, T N Hanekom, C W Cook and E Brown to make his point.

46. Southey cites F A van Jaarsveld, Van apologiek en objectiwitiet in ons kerkgeskiedskrywing (Elsiesrivier, 1953).

47. Cf T N Hanekom, "Afrika in die lig van die Suid-Afrikaanse kerkgeskiedskrywing" Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae II (1976) pp 35-36.

48. Cook, op cit, pp 113ff and E Brown, "The necessity of a 'black' South African church history" in H-J Becken (ed) Relevant Theology for Africa (Durban : Lutheran Publishing House, 1973).

> unconsciously, a propensity for certain judgments in spite of the all too conscious attempt to be rational and objective.[49]

For example, many of the church histories have been written from the perspective of the dominant members. It is for this reason that, during the 1960's and 1970's, there were calls for history to be conducted from "the underside" :

> To tell the story of the churches, their complicity with the colonial domination of black South Africans, the accompanying story of local Christians and their experience of subjugation, social deprivation and socio-political oppression and the Christian influence on the liberation struggle and its influence on South African society.[50]

The value of historical study is that, when it is pursued self-consciously, critically and together with other persons (preferably from different backgrounds), fondly held illusions can be dispelled and possibilities for religious and social renewal opened up. In historical studies one's own ideas must be "put at risk", and if there is a genuine dialogue with the past, this may change one's views. Quoting from Gadamer, Pillay says :

> Genuine dialogue with the past "always involves a laying open and holding open of possibilities that suspend the presumed finality of both the text's and the reader's current opinions.[51]

To this end, Southey issues a warning : beware of historicism. By this he means that writers may be tempted to use history to suit their own ideological purposes :

> Scholars who seek to draw important truths or lessons from the past in order to support a particular position within contemporary theology run the risk of poor historical methodology, superficiality and a consequent weakening of argument. Any historian of integrity has to be prepared to learn from the past. This may well involve the modification, or even the rejection, of earlier presuppositions.[52]

---

49. G Pillay, "The problem of interpretation and reinterpretation of the history of the black churches" (Unpublished paper) p 3. Due to be published in the last issue of Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae for 1992.

50. Pillay, ibid, p 5.

51. Quoted by Pillay, "The fanaticised consciousness" op cit p 11 from Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics 1976, xxi. A similar point is made by Southey, op cit, p 14.

52. Southey, ibid, p 14.

In short, no historian can fully escape the influence of his or her past, but a conscious effort can be made to write history rather than mere propaganda.

4. The Historical Methods employed in this thesis.

What I seek to do in this thesis is to approach the Baptist tradition in South Africa from a different perspective compared to what has hitherto been the case. That is, to take seriously the context (socio-cultural, psychological, political and economic) within which the Baptist churches were established and developed. Further, an attempt is made to seek to uncover the historical perceptions from "the underside" which are so often neglected, even ignored. For, to judge the South African Baptists purely in terms of the dominant, white tradition would be to distort the historical experience and perceptions of the other members of this denomination.

But, it may be objected, how can someone who is not a member of an oppressed group in South Africa view history from any other vantage point than that of privilege? My answer to this is twofold. Firstly, though one cannot divorce oneself entirely from one's background, it is possible to limit its effects by exposing one's own perceptions to rigorous self-analysis as well as to critique from persons of different persuasions and social backgrounds. If the attaining of new perceptions and the development of new commitments were impossible, the academic task itself would be doomed to failure, as would any attempts at education or reconciliation. Furthermore, it is a fallacy to argue that only personal experience can lead to understanding. If this were so one would have to murder someone in order to come to the understanding that such an action is wrong. Similarly, a "revisionist" approach is not the private preserve of black writers, nor would one expect blacks to refrain writing histories about South Africa as a whole. Hence, says Pillay :

> ... it is neither true that the interpretation of black history can only be done by black people (any more that the reinterpretation of white history can only be done by white people) nor that the issues raised in, and the results of, the reinterpretation of black church history are relevant only for the history of African or black Christians.[53]

---

53. Pillay, "The problem of interpretation and reinterpretation of the history of the black churches" op cit, p 7.

My second response to the charge of elitism is that, as a woman, I am well acquainted with a certain type of oppression : that of men acting towards women in a defensive, patronizing and patriarchal manner; or simply ignoring women and refusing to hear their perceptions, pain and proposals. For black women, the degree and extent of the oppression is far, far worse.

In my view, then, Baptists (and other persons) of different backgrounds are free to engage in the task of assessing the response of the South African Baptist churches to the social conditions within which they have found themselves. This thesis does not seek artificially to separate black and white Baptists. The aim is to assess the extent to which Baptists from different races, classes, genders and cultures have actually been part of the process of formulating doctrine, determining mission policies and contributing to local church ministries; and, finally, to indicate under what conditions a more representative, creative and relevant Baptist witness can emerge.

5. The use of Sources.

In the above subsections, mention is made of the pitfalls and challenges of church history such as polemicism, ethnic limitations, elitism, etc. But, in addition to these, there is another practical problem that faces the interpreter of Baptist history, that is, the use of sources.

A wide variety of sources have been used in this thesis. The primary and secondary written sources have included both Baptist and non-Baptist works. The Baptist material includes magazines, newspapers, annual Handbooks, Centenary pamphlets, publications of the South African Baptist Historical Society, and unpublished papers. In addition to Baptist sources, a variety of books, articles, reports and unpublished theses have been consulted. These are drawn from theological and other writings on South African history and ecclesiology, methodology and the historical Baptist tradition.

In addition to these written sources, the arguments contained in this thesis have been drawn from my personal experience as a member or adherent of several Baptist churches in South Africa. I have also engaged in a number of informal discussions with a wide variety of Baptist leaders, pastors, members and theologians, mainly in South Africa, but also from other parts of the world. Finally, I conducted a questionnaire at the 1989 Baptist Union Assembly.

On what basis, then, have these sources been interpreted? A concerted attempt is made to re-read the South African Baptist tradition in the light of the Baptist tradition as a whole, contemporary theological insights, and the historical and present-day South African context. It has also been necessary to read "behind" many of the existing writings of South African Baptists, precisely because of the unacknowledged ideological commitments already discussed. In relation to perspectives from blacks and women, I have been compelled to rely more heavily on non-written sources precisely because these groups have had so little opportunity to express their views.

It would be naïve of me to be believe that the approach adopted in this thesis will be welcomed by all, especially those within the dominant Baptist tradition. But, in a study of this nature, controversy is inevitable :

> ... the study of history is at one and the same time both suspected of treason to the sacred cause and the means of healing controversy by bringing each side under the necessity of its being forgiven for what it has done.(54)

Only time will tell whether my interpretations of the Baptist sources cited in this thesis constitute a valid understanding of the past and a valuable tool in pursuit of obedience to the Gospel of Christ within the present (and future) South African context.

C. THE PRIVATISED GOSPEL OF THE BAPTISTS AND THEOLOGICAL METHOD.

Christian Theology is a many-faceted discipline. Not only are there a great many schools of thought (Reformed, Liberal, Evangelical, Liberationist, Charismatic, etc), but theology itself is sub-divided into Biblical Studies, Systematic Theology, Church History and the like. The issue is further complicated by the fact that believers and theologians often approach their subject by integrating two or more of these approaches. Certain South African Baptists, thus, could be described as Reformed Baptists, Conservative Evangelicals or Charismatics. In addition to these influences, there is the less obvious influence of one's class, culture, race and gender. It appears that within the Baptist Union there is a lack of consciousness of the influence of one's context on one's theology.

The word "context" has many facets. It could refer to the various contexts within which the Bible itself was written, or the contexts within which the Baptist tradition developed since the Reformation, or the contexts

---

54. Cook, ibid p 114.

within which Baptists in South Africa live today. The approach adopted in this thesis is that of Contextual Theology which, though certainly not espousing relativism, seeks to pursue its investigations with the awareness that theology, faith and religious commitment are expressed in and influenced by these contexts.

The following section also seeks to identify some of the implications of Contextual Theology for the class, race, culture and gender analyses contained in this thesis. Whereas the importance of class and, to a lesser extent, race have already been discussed, the dimensions of culture and gender are given further attention below.

1. The Bible and Contextual Theology.

In terms of biblical exegesis, attention must be given to both the biblical contexts and the contexts of the modern interpreters.

To begin with, the Bible was written within a series of different contexts : political (eg the Israelite monarchy and the exile); cultural (eg Jewish and Roman); social (eg patriarchal); and economic (nomadic, agricultural and urban). For this reason, an emphasis on the authority of the Bible alone, such as that found in the two Baptist statements of faith discussed in chapter one, is insufficient. The various contexts within which biblical pronouncements occur must be taken into account before one can declare what "the Bible says" concerning a particular issue. For example, regarding the role of women within the church, it is wrong to take the statement "I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man..." (1 Tim 2.12a) out of its 1st century Ephesian context and to ignore other pertinent New Testament passages concerning women.[55] The same can be said concerning the pronouncements of some Christians about the politics of Jesus and the socio-political function of the church.

Whereas many Christians, at least since 19th century Biblical Criticism, have acknowledged the importance of the biblical context, fewer Christians have come to grips with the influence of the contexts of modern interpreters. As a result, the influence on hermeneutics of the social position, gender, education, culture, personal experience, etc, of the modern interpreter has not been sufficiently emphasised.[56] This has led to the

---

55. See L Kretzschmar, "Hermeneutics, Culture, and the Apostle Paul's view of women" Women's Studies 2:1 (1990) 37-51.

56. See Gerald West, Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1991).

situation where, for example, white Baptists believe that they can make pronouncements about what "the Bible says" concerning Apartheid without reference to black Baptists' perceptions. It also means that white Baptists are largely unaware of the extent to which the self-interest of their social group has selectively interpreted the Bible and, thereby, diluted and domesticated the very Gospel they seek to proclaim.

2. Contextual Theology and Baptist Tradition.

Any understanding of the significance of a contextual approach to theology must begin with the awareness that all theology is contextual. That is, whether one examines the thought of the Aquinas, the Anabaptists or African theologians, it can be seen that they seek, consciously or unconsciously, to address their faith to the situation that confronts them - as they see it. Similarly, the Baptist tradition was formulated within a variety of contexts : the 16th century Reformation; the English Civil war; and the socio-political conflicts of South African society. Consequently, these contexts need to be taken into account if this tradition is to be correctly understood and if abstract and escapist theologising is to be avoided.

Why do various South African Baptists emphasise different aspects of their faith and understand their faith in divergent ways? Some Baptists, for example, regard evangelism as a priority whilst others stress the need for social renewal, the threat of the New Age movement, women's ordination, etc. The perceptions that various Christians have of the problems and challenges that face the believer will determine the nature of their theological praxis; and these perceptions arise out of their personal and social experience. Religious commitment, experience and activities cannot be abstracted from people's social context. These assertions can be illustrated with reference to the way in which sin, salvation and the mission of the church are understood.

Within the Baptist Union, sin is largely conceived of in terms of rebellion against God or sins committed within individual relationships. As a result, Baptist preaching of "the Gospel" often amounts to a call for repentance from sins such as refusing to commit oneself to God, adultery, slander, theft and pride, without also challenging individuals and groups to desist from discrimination, greed, domination, fear and exploitation.

In short, the perception that sin is to be found not only in the actions of the individual, but also in the structures of society which have been developed and established by sinful humanity, seems to be largely absent. Thus, even though enormous emphasis is placed on the authority of the Bible, the social force of passages such as Amos 5.10-24, Micah 6.8, Is 1.12-20, Matt 25.31-46 and Luke 4.18-19 is seldom recognised. This fact was acknowledged by a previous President of the Baptist Union, the Rev Ellis André, when he said that :

> The Baptist Union has distinguished sharply between its proclamation of the Gospel of personal salvation and its witness to the State in respect of moral and socio-political affairs. It is a fundamental contention of this dissertation that South African Baptists need to re-evaluate their understanding of the Gospel if they are to play a more meaningful role in the affairs of the nation.(57)

What, then, is social sin? Baum has listed the following key features of social sin. Institutional injustice, ideological control of cultural and religious symbols, the false consciousness that results from evil institutions and ideological control of symbols and, finally, the collective decision of groups to reinforce these three manifestations of social sin.(58) Translated into our context, social sin has been manifested in the institutional sin of Apartheid, including the exclusion of blacks from the educational, political and economic privileges freely enjoyed by white South Africans. Furthermore, whites have controlled the way in which the Baptist faith is to be understood and expressed in theological education, worship, preaching, and ecclesiastical government. This control has resulted in a false consciousness amongst many Baptist leaders who are often unable to perceive the extent and evil consequences of their ideological captivity. Even more tragic has been the way in which blacks and women have internalised this domination, and have failed to recognise and resist their second-class status. Finally, thousands of Baptists have collectively decided to bury their heads in the sand rather than begin the painful process of personal and group self-examination, repentance and restitution. This decision is, then, reinforced by the attitudes, agendas and pronouncements of the members of Baptist Union. This was all too clearly illustrated by the 1991 Baptist

---

57. From the abstract of his MA dissertation entitled "The Baptist understanding of the relationship between Church and State with particular reference to the South African situation" submitted to the University of Cape Town in 1984. See also his discussion on pp 103 ff.

58. Baum, op cit, pp 201 ff.

Union Assembly "confession" concerning Apartheid, which verbally acknowledged its acquiescence with Apartheid, without publically announcing (and implementing) a genuine and workable strategy of theological, ecclesiastical and social renewal.[59]

What, then, of the Baptist Union's understanding of the term "mission"? The 1877 Baptist Union's statement of aims included the following two clauses :

- To promote the evangelisation of the country.
- To plant and assist churches in which those principles shall be or have been adopted.[60]

Significantly, the term "mission" is not used and the emphasis is placed on "evangelism". But, an analysis of these two terms in Baptist literature reveals that they are generally used interchangeably, the exception to this rule being that "evangelism" often means evangelistic work amongst white congregations, whilst "mission" means evangelistic work embarked upon amongst blacks, ie "on the mission field". Further, evangelism refers to the "saving of souls", that is, the proclamation of the Gospel to individuals with a view to eliciting a "personal decision for Christ". The further aims of mission, as understood by the Baptist Union, are personal discipleship and "church planting".[61] Indeed, the notion that the church's mission consists of evangelism, personal discipleship and church planting is a persistent one in Baptist Union circles.

As recently as 1988, when the BMD (Baptist Mission Department, previously the SABMS) revised its mission policies, the objects and functions of Baptist mission were outlined as follows :

> To reach men and women everywhere with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so that they are brought to discipleship and service, and to gather them into churches of the Baptist faith and order...[62]

This policy document stresses evangelism, world evangelism, discipleship and church planting, but it offers no precise definition of evangelism nor does it indicate a consciousness of the wider debate in missionary circles. The

---

59. Cf the 1991 Documented Agenda for the BU Assembly.

60. Hudson-Reed, Together, pp 39 & 50.

61. Ibid, pp 25, 45, 93, 112 ff. See also the East London Church's "City Baptist Church Centenary : 1883-1983" compiled by Bernard S Sprenger pp 39-48.

62. BMD Document regarding policy (T D Pass, 1988) p 3.

impression that a deeper social consciousness is absent is reinforced by the document's description of the commitments which underlie Baptist missionary policy. Whilst clauses one, three and four deal with world evangelisation, the establishment of individual churches and Baptist co-operation with other evangelical mission agencies, the second clause reveals that the BMD espouses an inherent privatization. It stresses that it is committed to :

> ... evangelism and consequent church planting as the primary function of mission work. Recognising that healing and education are a valid expression of Christian compassion, and that these ministries may be the only form of witness in certain countries, their role is nevertheless secondary, and the Baptist Mission Department will endeavour not to become inextricably involved in them.(63)

What are the limitations (and fallacies) inherent in the Baptist Union's perception of mission? Firstly, it is a privatised view primarily concerned with the relationship between individuals or the individual soul and God. It does not adequately reflect a concern for the whole person, inter-human relationships, interaction between social groups and creation itself. It certainly has little, if anything, to say concerning mission as genuine partnership between Baptists of different races or about mission as social transformation. It is also primarily, if not exclusively, a white vision and it fails to take into account the historical and present-day South African context.

Secondly, it is not consistent with the holistic ministry of Jesus and many biblical passages such as those already cited. All too often, the more limited church planting activities of Paul are emphasised to the virtual exclusion of Jesus' mission to the poor, sick, oppressed and marginalised people of 1st century Palestine. Further, other Pauline emphases such as what being "in Christ" means in practical terms (cf Gal 3.28; Acts 16.35-40; Eph 2.11-16; Acts 11.27-30 and 2 Cor 8.1-5) are all too often absent from Baptist preaching and practice.

According to a prominent South African missiologist, David Bosch, the term "mission" should encompass at least three aspects namely, proclamation (kerygma), service (diakonia) and fellowship (koinonia).(64) Within

---

63. Ibid, p 7, my emphasis. Other examples include SA Baptist (June 1976) pp 24-26; (Oct 1980) pp 16-17; Baptists Today (July 1987) pp 5-8 and Baptists Today (Jan/Feb 1992) pp 5-7.

64. Cf David J Bosch, Witness to the World (London : Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980) & "In Search of Mission: Reflections on 'Melbourne' and 'Pattaya' Miss 9:1 (1981) pp 3-18.

Bosch's understanding, kerygma is more than the proclamation of personal salvation. The Gospel must not only be proclaimed to individuals, but also to groups, institutions and the governing authorities. Furthermore, mission is more than kerygma. Mission, though it must include evangelism, discipleship and church planting, is much more than this.(65)

Unless mission includes the dimension of fellowship and promotes genuine unity within the denomination, it is fatally flawed. Further, if it does not include a concern for service (both in terms of immediate relief and long-term structural transformation), it is simply not Christian mission at all.

Thirdly, a narrow perception of mission is not consistent with all the elements of the Baptist heritage. This heritage includes the broad missionary and community concerns of the 16th century Anabaptists as well as the many 18th century social reforms enacted by members of the Evangelical Revival (including a number of Baptists). Further, as shown in chapter four, such a privatised view of mission was not held by William Carey, the founder of the Baptist Missionary Society and pioneer of the entire 19th century missionary enterprise.

Fourthly, many Baptists in South Africa are seemingly isolated from developments in missiological thinking amongst certain overseas Evangelicals.(66) Though not directly addressing our situation, the following statement by Padilla is extremely pertinent to the way mission is all too often understood by Baptists within the Union :

> In many cases missionary work continues to be done from a position of political and economic power and with the assumption of Western superiority in matters of culture and race.(67)

For all these reasons, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, consciously or unconsciously, the social position and interests of leading Baptists are determining doctrinal formulations and Baptist policy. Finally, because Baptists within the Union are isolated from, or deaf to, alternative

---

65. Nor is mission simply "saving lost souls", compare Bosch "Mission in Jesus' Way : A Perspective from Luke's gospel" Miss 17:1 (April 1989) pp 3-21 and Baptists Today (Nov 1987) p 5 and (Jan 1988) p 5. Bosch was once invited to address a Baptist mission conference but his paper was not printed, cf Baptist Today (June 1988) p 6.

66. See also R Padilla, Mission between the Times (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985). Even John Stott, generally regarded as a moderate evangelical, has in recent years emphasised the importance of social action.

67. C René Padilla, ibid, p 134.

voices from within and without the Union, their privatised approach is not being challenged by their theological and social context. Arguably, many Baptists are living in a state of "pseudo-innocence".

3. Contextual Theology in contemporary South Africa.

During the past twenty-odd years, a variety of new theological approaches have emerged within South Africa. These include African Theology, Black Theology, Liberation Theology and Feminist Theology. All of these are here collectively termed "Contextual Theologies" and, amongst other things, they respectively emphasise the importance of culture, race, class and gender.

Within South Africa, African Theologians have argued that Western cultural beliefs and practices have all too often not been distinguished from Christian faith. The consequence has been that African cultural expressions have been devalued as non-Christian. Similarly, aspects of traditional African religion have been rejected out of hand rather than being assimilated or, where necessary, Christianised.(68) African Theology has also been critical of the individualism and dualism of Western Theology which has resulted in many African Christians experiencing a type of "religious schizophrenia".(69) Thus, African theologians have stressed the contribution that a traditional African emphasis on community and a holistic understanding of salvation can make to Christian faith and experience. In addition, certain African theologians have argued that African Theology is not only concerned with culture (narrowly defined as customary practices) but also with personal, socio-economic, political and religious liberation.(70)

At the outset, Black Theology in South Africa was closely associated with the Black Consciousness movement of the late 1960's which rejected both

---

68. See the discussion and extensive bibliography in L Kretzschmar, The Voice of Black Theology in South Africa (Johannesburg : Ravan, 1986) pp 24-58 and 116-134.

69. See L Kretzschmar, "An Introduction to African Christian Theology" IN (ed) L Kretzschmar, Christian Faith and African Culture : Religious Studies Forum 1988 (University of Transkei) pp 7-18, esp p 12.

70. See L Kretzschmar, "Should African Theology be a Theology of Liberation?" IN (ed) L Pato, Towards an authentic African Christianity : Religious Studies Forum 1989 (University of Transkei) pp 63-76.

racism and liberal-style integration.[71] Since then, Black Theologians have increasingly incorporated the economic and class analyses of Latin American Liberation Theology and merged them with the race analyses pertinent to the South African context.[72]

Finally, Feminist Theology (arguably a dimension of Liberation Theology) requires brief mention. Only recently has this vital gender component received attention in South Africa. Whereas American feminists such as Letty Russell, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Mary Daly have long had a highly visible profile, South African feminists have only in the past few years been given a measure of recognition by the theological and ecclesiastical community. Feminist theologians have tackled a variety of issues including biblical interpretation, church history and Christian doctrine.[73] Issues such as women's ministry, ordination, and male-female socialisation have also been stressed.[74] Recently, the first major book to emerge within South Africa on the church and women's issues has been published.[75]

4. The importance of Contextual Theology for South African Baptists.

The value of Contextual Theology is that it is embarked upon consciously rather than unconsciously. In other words, the very presuppositions, agendas, visions and interests that drive the theological

---

71. Cf J N J Kritzinger, "Black Theology : A Challenge to Mission" (Unpublished PhD thesis, UNISA, 1988).

72. See the Journal of Black Theology and books such as The Unquestionable Right to be Free edited by Itumeleng J Mosala and Buti Thlagale (Johannesburg : Skotaville, 1986).

73. Marie-Henry Keane, "Women in the Theological Anthropology of the Early Church Fathers" JTSA 62 (1988) pp 3-13; Megan Walker, "The Challenge of Feminism to the Christian concept of God" JTSA 66 (1989) pp 4-20; and other articles in this issue.

74. Denise Ackerman, "The role of women in the church - certain practical theological perspectives" in (ed) W Vorster, Sexism and Feminism in Theological Perspective (Pretoria : UNISA, 1984) pp 61-83; Report of the Commission on the ordination of Women (Church of the Province of Southern Africa, 1989) 58pp; and "Women's Struggle in South Africa" Feminist Theology Conference, 31 August - 2 September 1984, held in Hammanskraal (Johannesburg : ICT, 1984) 43pp.

75. (eds) D Ackerman, J Draper and E Mashinini, Women Hold Up Half the Sky : Women in the Church in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg : Cluster, 1992).

enterprise are admitted and can, thus, form part of the theological debate. The danger of this contextual approach is, however, that if only one group is engaged in the debate, it will produce only self-fulfilling prophecies. This means that Baptists of different persuasions and social backgrounds must participate in the development of a Baptist vision for the future. Further, meaningful contact with Baptists internationally and other Christians here and abroad must be maintained. If these steps are not taken, the Christian faith will be relativised and the Baptist denomination left without the power of an internally transforming tradition.

The insights of Contextual Theology can reveal to Baptists the limitations of the dominant South African tradition. This will enable Baptists who are presently marginalised, especially blacks and women, to correct the imbalances and distortions of this dominant tradition. For, as both Weber and Metz have shown, it is those from the "underside" of history that are in a position to critique a dominant form of theological praxis.[76] The "despised of the world" must voice their pain and provide a creative contribution derived from African culture, Black identity, the experience of the poor and powerless, and the patronised and exploited women.

Rather than white Baptists being quick to point out aspects of African culture which they regard as un-Christian, they need to be equally conscious of the un-Christian nature of aspects of their own culture. Rather than despising all that is black or African, Baptists (both black and white) need to ask how the cultural and racial diversity of South African society can be appreciated, transformed and expressed within Baptist theology, worship and ministry. Instead of avoiding the guilt and pain of the past, Baptists need to recognise the extent to which their denomination has been overshadowed by certain class interests. This will enable Baptists of all classes to become aware of ideological manipulation within their theological tradition and the suppression of the insights and experience of Africans, blacks, the poor and women. Finally, women, rather than internalising their oppression (whether this be psychological or structural) need to realise why they have been relegated to second-class status and go on to seek the full liberation of the Gospel of Christ.

---

76. Cf J-B Metz, Faith in History and Society (London : Burns and Oats, 1980) pp 88 ff. C Villa-Vicencio discusses the importance and role of the "dangerous memory" of which Metz speaks in Trapped in Apartheid pp 5, 132 & 213.

In conclusion, then, a grasp of the social context within which the Baptist faith originally emerged is vital to a more creative understanding and application of the rich Baptist tradition. Equally important are the influences of modern social contexts, particularly the ideological commitments engendered by racial, class, cultural and gender loyalties. Historical methodology, also, forms an essential foundation of this thesis inasmuch as the traditional Baptist histories need to be reviewed in the light of both 20th century "secular" historiography and the many "revisionist" church histories that have emerged in recent years, particularly from within the English speaking churches. The Baptist denomination, like any other, is rooted in historical circumstances and, if these are not clearly elucidated, an a-contextual and distorted understanding of the Baptist tradition is the result. This does not mean that Baptist doctrines are to be relativised, still less that historicism should be encouraged. On the contrary, an awareness of how and why Baptist theological praxis emerged and developed is an indispensable element in the task of enabling the South African Baptists to emerge from their present experience of distrust and disunity.

Finally, this analysis of the South African Baptists can benefit enormously from a Contextual Theological approach. This is because the Bible itself, as well as the Baptist tradition, needs to be examined in the light of our social and psychological contexts. Because these contexts receive attention in African, Black, Liberation and Feminist theologies, Baptists can learn a great deal from these approaches. Rather than perpetuating forms of theological praxis that are isolated from the real questions of our South African context, Baptists need to be encouraged to ask questions and develop strategies that can assist them to make a genuine contribution to the personal, social and ecological challenges of our time.

In order to both identify the origins of theological privatization and those socio-theological resources which can facilitate the emancipation of the South African Baptist tradition from the restrictions of privatization, a study of Baptist roots is necessary. In the following two chapters, Reformed, Separatist, Anabaptist, and English Baptist traditions are examined in order to illustrate the emergence of privatization as well as the dissonance between the actual nature of these traditions and the perceptions that many South African Baptists have concerning their Baptist roots. In so doing, attention is given specifically to the theological concerns of this

thesis rather than to a general historical examination of the period between the Protestant Reformation and the late 19th century.

****

CHAPTER THREE

SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTIST ROOTS : THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

To speak of the South African Baptist roots is to recognise that this tradition has its origins in earlier traditions, though the precise extent of the influence of these traditions may differ. A direct historical link, for example, differs from an indirect theological influence. But, why are roots important? Because, in the celebrated words of John Donne, no individual or group is "an island, entire of itself : every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main..." Thus, even though they may not be aware of it, South African Baptists draw their belief in "justification by faith" not simply from the New Testament, but from Luther. Equally, they draw their doctrine of the separation between Church and State from the Anabaptists. However, because doctrines such as these are often abstracted from their original historical and social context, they are distorted or neglected.

An examination of these roots is necessary for at least three reasons. Firstly, to foster a greater awareness amongst South African Baptists of their theological heritage. For, whilst it is true that past traditions can sometimes be inflexible and stultifying, it is also true that a denomination that is ignorant of its own history is likely to repeat its errors and fail to benefit from its historical insights. Secondly, it must be asked which of their Reformation roots the Baptists emphasise, so as to uncover the ideological commitments that lie behind such "selections". And thirdly, it is necessary to develop a basis for a more creative and relevant re-reading of these magisterial and radical Reformation traditions within a contemporary South African context.

The fact that the South African Baptists are rooted mainly in the English Baptist tradition has not been disputed.[1] The origin of the English Baptist tradition itself, however, has been the subject of a complex and prolonged debate. Some scholars have argued that the roots of the English Baptist churches must be sought in English Separatism (and thereby in the magisterial Reformation of Luther and Calvin) whilst others have argued that the Dutch Mennonite Waterlanders (and thereby the Continental

---

1. The influence of the American Baptists (themselves English offshoots) and the German Baptists are discussed in chapters 5-7.

Anabaptists) are the real antecedents of the 17th century English Baptists. It is my view that both of these groups (together with their socio-historical contexts) are important to a proper understanding of English and South African Baptist roots. Even more vital, for the purposes of this thesis, is the way in which elements of these diverse traditions have been adopted, distorted and neglected so as to produce, albeit unconsciously, a privatised understanding of both the Christian faith and the Baptist tradition.

A. THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS.

Whilst the South African Baptists stress their indebtedness to the magisterial Reformers and the English Baptists, they largely fail to appreciate their Anabaptist roots.

1. South African Baptist perceptions concerning their history.

To begin with, South African Baptists consciously identify themselves with the Protestant Reformation. In particular, they stress their indebtedness to reformers such as Luther and Calvin. From time to time "adherence to the principles and doctrines of the Protestant Reformed Faith" were affirmed at Baptist Assemblies.[2] Other examples of this emphasis on reformed doctrine include the extensive use of Reformed theology in the Parktown Colleges lecture notes on Systematic Theology, and in teaching of the Reformed Baptist Association.[3] Finally, in Ellis André's thesis on Church/State relations, frequent references to the magisterial Reformers are to be found.

But what about the direct historical origins of the English Baptists? The general tendency amongst South African Baptists has been to emphasise their Separatist origins and, variously, to omit, repudiate or inadequately apply their historical and theological indebtedness to the 16th century Anabaptists.[4]

To begin with, it is clear that certain Baptists, such as H J Batts, regarded the Separatist Pilgrim Fathers as the forerunners of the English

---

2. See SABH 1950-51, p 98, SABH 1952-53, p 95 and SABH 1960-61, p 164

3. See the External Studies lecture notes "Systematic Theology 1a and 1b" and the pamphlet Reformation : South Africa (Fourth Quarter) pp 8-10.

4. L Kretzschmar, "The Neglected Heritage : An examination of the Anabaptist roots of the South African Baptist churches" Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae 16:2 (1990) p 135.

Baptists. Concerning the Baptists amongst the 1820 settlers he says :

> There these pioneers, like the Pilgrim Fathers of an earlier date, from the same stock, and with the same traditions, claimed their freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, untrammelled by State restrictions or sacerdotal interference, and they set up their banner ... in the name of the Lord God and Jesus Christ ...[5]

South African Baptists have consistently regarded themselves as originating with the Puritans.[6] Even during a discussion of church government, baptism, liberty, and adherence to the Bible at a seminar on Baptist principles in 1976, no reference was made to the Anabaptists.[7] More recently, in the lecture notes supplied to external students by the Baptist Theological College in Parktown (in use as late as 1988) on "Baptist Principles", the Anabaptists and Mennonites are occasionally mentioned, but no detailed discussion of their influence is to be found. This despite the fact that central Baptist doctrines such as the separation of Church and State, believer's baptism and the liberty of conscience were originally formulated not by the English Separatists, but by the Anabaptists.[8]

Another example of the omission of the Baptists' indebtedness to the Anabaptists is the content of a booklet entitled Baptist Blue-Print 1965 which deals, amongst other things, with the nature and purpose of the Church. Whilst other reformers such as Calvin, Luther and Zwingli are mentioned, not a single reference to the Anabaptists is to be found.

Furthermore, one can search in vain for a comprehensive discussion of the Anabaptists and their relevance for South African Baptists in the annual Handbooks or in the magazines and newspapers published by the Baptist Union. This means that the majority of South African Baptist pastors and members have little or no idea of who the Anabaptists were, let alone of their importance in forming Baptist doctrine.

The second tendency amongst South African Baptist writers is to deny or minimise the theological dependence of the English Baptists on the Anabaptists. In a Master's thesis written in 1972, Hudson-Reed said this about English Baptist origins :

---

5. Batts, op cit, p 4.

6. SA Baptist (Nov 1951) p 284.

7. See the report in SA Baptist (July 1976) pp 13-14.

8. See the External Studies notes on "Baptist Principles" supplied by the Baptist Theological College in Parktown. The notes on "Ecclesiology" contain no specific mention of the Anabaptists.

> The consensus of scholastic opinion, however, would trace the beginning of English Baptist witness to a specialization of Puritan Separatism rather than the outcome of the older Anabaptist movement of the 16th Century. Not only did the early English Baptist churches repudiate the name Anabaptist, but there were such differences of faith and practice between them and the sober Mennonites, the true heirs of the Anabaptists, would not admit the English Baptist churches into fellowship.(9)

However, in his doctoral dissertation, Hudson-Reed comes to a rather different conclusion concerning the origins of the English Baptists :

> In respect of the general Baptist congregation which returned to England under Helwys and Murton it may be confidently concluded that Anabaptist influence was clearly discernable ... It is significant that on his return from Holland Thomas Helwys became the first Englishman to pen an unequivocal claim for freedom of conscience.(10)

In relation to the rise of the Particular Baptists, also, Hudson-Reed states that Anabaptist influence "is not only possible but highly probable".(11)

Although Hudson-Reed goes on to discuss the "formative influences" of 16th century Dutch Anabaptism on Christianity in general terms, he does not develop these insights in relation to the South African Baptists. In so doing, he aligns himself with a <u>third</u> tendency amongst South African Baptist writers, namely, those who note the Anabaptist link, but do not expand on the implications of this heritage for modern South African Baptists.

This is reflected in an article on "Rendering unto Caesar and to God" where Norman Schaefer refers to the Anabaptists, but fails to relate his theological principles to the South African situation.(12) Similarly, in a article entitled "Baptists and Social Concern", Jeffree James said this concerning the Anabaptists :

> Undoubtably the Anabaptists of the 16th century are amongst the spiritual, if not lineal, ancestors of the modern Baptist movement which originated in England with the formation of the Gainsborough Baptist church under the leadership of John Smyth

---

9. S Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings in South Africa : 1820-1877" (University of Natal, MA Thesis, 1972) p 10.

10. S Hudson-Reed, "Sixteenth Century Dutch Anabaptism : A critical examination of its origins, basic principles and practice and its formative influences" (University of Natal, PhD, 1989), pp 230 and 202-215.

11. <u>Ibid</u>, pp 229 and 215-232.

12. <u>SA Baptist</u> (April 1980) pp 20-22.

in 1608.[13]

James notes the social concerns of both the Anabaptists and the English Baptists but, other than re-emphasising the principle of the separation of Church and State and noting that the State should expect the Church to address it "in matters affecting social righteousness and justice", James does not explain how modern South African Baptists should apply their radical social heritage to their present-day situation.[14]

Similarly, in Being a Baptist, Parnell states that previous criticisms of the Anabaptists have been unfounded.[15] He also notes that it was the Anabaptists who first stressed regenerate church membership and believer's baptism and, thereby, opposed the "power-complex" of state imposed religious belief.[16] Unfortunately, Parnell does not discuss what the relevance of the Anabaptist witness is for modern South African Baptists.

The person who comes closest to appreciating the influence of the Anabaptists on the English Baptists is Ellis André, even though his understanding of the Anabaptists is somewhat limited.[17] Although he does not embark upon an extensive analysis of the implications of this heritage for the South African Baptists, he does mention vital matters such as the socio-political implications of believer's baptism and the tendency towards political quietism amongst South African Baptists. But more of this later.

Having outlined the way in which leading South African Baptists perceive their theological heritage, attention can now be given to an analysis of the historical roots of the South African Baptists by identifying the roots of the English Baptists.

2. The Baptists and the Magisterial Reformers.

There is no direct historical link between the English Baptists and the major magisterial Reformers. Luther, Zwingli and Calvin dominated the 16th

---

13. J James, "Baptists and Social Action" in a collection of unpublished Occasional Papers (c 1989) p 1.

14. Ibid, p 4.

15. C Parnell, Being a Baptist (Roodepoort: Baptist Publishing House, 1980) pp 43-44.

16. Ibid, pp 34-35 and 82-83.

17. See his MA thesis entitled "The Baptist understanding of the relationship between Church and State" (University of Cape Town, 1984) pp 14-16, 20 ff, 26 ff and 87.

century, whereas the English Baptists formed a recognisable group only in the 17th century. Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to deduce from this fact that they exercised no influence over the Baptists. Indeed, it may be surmised that few people who lived during or immediately after the Reformation escaped the influence of these theological giants. Of what, then, did this influence consist?

The Baptists affirmed the central tenets of Protestantism. Along with the magisterial Reformers they were critical of Catholicism and its Pope, saw themselves as part of a new religious movement, emphasised the doctrine of 'justification by faith', and regarded the Bible as the source of their authority. Also, the writings of the magisterial Reformers were widely read and disseminated from the 16th century onwards. During the 16th and 17th centuries there were many English Protestants, of different theological persuasions, living in exile in European cities or in hiding in England and Scotland. There can be little doubt that a cross-pollination of ideas took place between these religious refugees. All these factors formed an indirect, yet influential, historical link between the magisterial Reformers and the English Baptists.

Of all the magisterial Reformers, it was Calvin who exercised the most direct influence on the English Baptists. At first, given their Separatist origins, the pioneers of the Baptist movement were all Calvinists. Subsequently, however, both Smyth and Helwys repudiated the doctrine of particular atonement and espoused views more Arminian in nature.[18] It is for this reason that the first Baptist churches were the General or Arminian and not Particular or Calvinistic Baptist churches.

Nevertheless, Calvin's influence lived on in the theology of the Particular Baptists who developed as a distinct group between 1633 and 1638, and their confessions of 1644 and 1677 were markedly influenced by earlier Calvinistic confessions.[19] Calvinist doctrine (in contrast to Lutheranism) was a more effective vehicle for the social aspirations of the rising middle classes.[20] By the 18th century, the Particular

---

18. Cf B R White, The English Baptists of the 17th Century, p 24.

19. These included the Separatist Confession of 1596, the Independents' Savoy Confession of 1658 and the Presbyterian Westminster Confession of 1647, cf B R White, The English Baptists of the 17th Century, p 8 and also W M S West, "Foundation Documents of the Faith : VIII. Baptists and Statements of Faith" Exp T 91 (1980) 228-223.

20. See R H Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1922/26) pp 103-139.

Baptists in England had developed the extreme form of Calvinism so sharply criticised by William Carey and others.

Much more significant in their own right, and as mediators of the theology of the magisterial Reformers, were the Separatists.

3. The Baptists and the English Separatists.

The Separatists led, amongst others, by Robert Browne and Henry Barrow, believed that a true church was characterised not simply by doctrinal conformity with the Bible, but also by scriptural adherence in matters of liturgy, ministerial office and moral discipline. If these conditions were not being met in their Anglican churches, believers needed to leave these false churches and establish separate, true churches. The English Baptists were initially closely linked to these Separatists, not least through their leader John Smyth.

In 1607, Smyth fled to Holland along with other Separatists such as John Robinson. There he and his Gainsborough congregation formed the "second" Separatist church in Amsterdam. The congregation of Smyth's sister church in Scrooby arrived in Amsterdam 1608, but left soon afterwards to settle briefly in Leiden. By 1609, together with other Pilgrims, a core of this congregation reached America.[21]

Because of links such as these, Stephen Brachlow has argued that Smyth's theology and ecclesiology developed logically from the left-wing separatism of his day.[22] He shows how the Puritans subtly altered their essentially Calvinist views concerning soteriology, by developing the notion of a conditional covenant in which saving faith was linked with noticeable good works. Increasing emphasis was also placed on an exclusive rather than inclusive church and the notion of a community of visible saints.[23] However, after arguing spiritedly that the roots of the Baptist denomination be sought in Separatism, Brachlow produces this conclusion :

> Whether the first appearance of Baptist ecclesiology within English dissent arose primarily as the result of dynamics

---

21. See Robert G Torbet, A History of the Baptists (Valley Forge : Judson Press, 1950/1953) pp 201 ff.

22. S Brachlow, "Puritan Theology and General Baptist Origins" Baptist Quarterly 31 (1985) p 179. See also K S Manely, "Origins of the Baptists : The case for Development from Puritanism- Separatism" Bapt H & H 22:4 (Oct 1987) 34-46.

23. Brachlow, ibid, pp 180-186.

> inherent to left-wing Puritanism and Separatism or as the cross fertilization of Separatist and Anabaptist ideals, is a problem likely never to be solved to every historian's satisfaction.[24]

The principal reason for this persistent element of doubt is that whilst Smyth was initially a Separatist, he went beyond Separatism as a result of Anabaptist influence. Within two years of arriving in Amsterdam, where he was a boarder in a Mennonite household, Smyth advanced the reasons for his rejection of infant baptism in The Character of the Beast (1609) and he moved away from his previous Calvinist view of atonement. In these decisions alone, Smyth's views form a notable contrast with Robinson's congregation, which had fled from England together with Smyth in 1607, but remained Separatists. Even Thomas Helwys, who disagreed with Smyth concerning their joining the Mennonites, did not return to the Separatist fold on his return to England, but remained true to his new Baptist convictions.

It is, however, in relation to the Particular rather than General Baptists that the Separatist connection is most often stressed. Thus, during the late 1630's, five Congregationalist churches accepted the theology and practice of believer's baptism and became Baptist churches. Before the stress on immersion in 1644, there were quite close links between the Baptists and the Congregationalists, and the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644 contained anti-anabaptist articles and exhibited Separatist influences.[25] Nevertheless, many of the English Baptists' theological views, as indicated below, clearly reveal Anabaptist origins.

In conclusion, then, it cannot be denied that the Separatist origins of the English Baptists are significant. Nevertheless, Separatism does not constitute a complete explanation for the rise and subsequent growth of Baptist churches in England, America and South Africa.

4. The English Baptists and the Anabaptists.

At the outset, some attempt must be made to define the term "Anabaptist". As is indicated by the ever-increasing volume of literature on the Anabaptists, this was an extremely diverse and complex movement. A further complicating factor is that scholars have been extremely divided as to the origins, basic characteristics, main actors and central beliefs of the

---

24. Brachlow, ibid, p 189.

25. White, The English Baptists of the 17th Century, pp 58-61.

Anabaptists. Whereas it was common, between the early 1950's and the mid-1970's, for a distinction to be made between the "Evangelical" or biblical Anabaptists and the revolutionary, rationalist and mystical Anabaptists, this distinction is no longer so clear cut.[26] A more recent trend in Anabaptist historiography has been to question whether Anabaptists can be dissociated from the Peasant's War and whether a sharp distinction can be drawn between the community of faith and the civil community.[27] In addition, Anabaptist historiography is now taking more cognisance of Marxist analyses of the radical Reformation, and scholars such as Stayer suggest three main, but independent, Anabaptist movements : the Swiss Anabaptists; the South German and Austrian Anabaptists; and the Dutch Anabaptists.[28] This means that Anabaptism did not originate solely with the Swiss Anabaptists, but had multiple origins.[29] Finally, with respect to the character of these movements, Snyder has questioned whether the importance of the Schleitheim Confession of 1527 has not been overemphasised.[30]

Historical connections between the English Baptists and the Anabaptists can be, demonstrated by discussing three main aspects: the presence of Anabaptist refugees in 16th century England; the rise of the General Baptists; and Anabaptist influences on the Particular Baptists. Each of these are briefly discussed below.

That there were Anabaptist refugees in England as early as the reign of Henry VIII is indisputable.[31] The presence and preaching of Anabaptists, especially in Kent and Essex, resulted in several royal

---

26. See G Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia : Westminster, 1962); W Estep, The Anabaptist Story (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1975) p 15 and G Hershberger The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottdale : Herald Press, 1957) pp 195 ff.

27. See D Hunter's summary of recent historiography in "The origins of Anabaptism and its import for South African Church History" JTSA 75 (June 1991) pp 61 ff.

28. Hunter, op cit, pp 64-74 and James M Stayer, "Anabaptists and Future Anabaptists in the Peasant's War" MQR 62:2 (April 1988) pp 99-139.

29. See Hudson-Reed's discussion of monogenesis and polygenesis in "Sixteenth Century Anabaptism" op cit, pp 15 and 31.

30. Arnold Snyder, "The influence of the Schleitheim Articles on the Anabaptist movement : a historical overview" MQR 63:4 (Oct 1989) 323-344.

31. Champlin Burrage, Early English Dissenters in the Light of recent Research 1550-1641 Vol 1 (New York : Russell and Russell, 1912) pp 41-67.

proclamations being issued against them, and a number of individuals were burnt at the stake between 1534 and 1611.[32] Their existence inflamed the fear of the English authorities, who were quick to label all sorts of dissenters as "Anabaptists" and to act with corresponding severity. It is not clear whether this was because of a general paranoia induced by the Münsterite excesses, or whether they feared that the Anabaptist teachings would unite the many disparate elements of dissent.

Because the authorities used the term "Anabaptist" in a markedly loose way, it is vitally necessary, as Loades rightly points out, to distinguish between "non-conformity, separatism and sectarianism" during this period.[33] A movement rather than a clearly distinguishable group or sect, Anabaptism was a generic term, incorporating various elements including continental Anabaptism, Separatism and the views of the Lollards.[34] These groups practiced community of property, held that Christians could not be magistrates, believed that Christ did not take flesh from the Virgin Mary, baptised only believers, insisted on the right of the congregation to choose and support its ministers, and argued for the limited jurisdiction of the civil authorities.[35]

What can be concluded from all of this? Firstly, that one cannot speak of Anabaptism in 16th century England in the same way that one can speak of Anabaptism on the continent during the same period. What distinguished the continental Anabaptists was their firm adherence to a gathered church of baptised believers, and it is only in the 17th century that an English Baptist church is historically discernable.[36] Whilst these earlier religious movements prepared the soil for the subsequent flowering of English Baptist churches[37], as well as the later growth of radical groups such as the Diggers and Levellers, the actual historical origins of the English

---

32. Cf Henry Vedder, A Short History of the Baptists, pp 193-198.

33. D Loades, "Anabaptism and English Sectarianism in the mid-sixteenth Century" in (ed) D Baker, Reform and Reformation : England and the Continent c1500 - 1750 (Oxford : Blackwells, 1979) p 63.

34. Loades, ibid, p 63.

35. Cf Loades ibid, p 61 and Vedder op cit, pp 195-197.

36. Ernest A Payne, The Story of the Baptists (London : Baptist Union Publications, 1978) p 3 and Vedder, A Short History of the Baptists, p 197.

37. Cf Robinson Baptist Principles, pp 61-62, based on Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches pp 9 & 12.

Baptists must be sought not in England, but in the Netherlands.

Who were the Dutch Anabaptists? Historically, they owed their existence to the preaching of Melchior Hoffmann. Subsequently, they split into two groups : the apocalyptic and revolutionary Anabaptists who, under the leadership of the Dutchmen Jan Matthys and Jan van Leyden, led the occupation of the city of Münster and the more pacifist members led by Obbe Philips (1500-1568).[38] After the slaughter that accompanied the fall of Münster, Dutch Anabaptism was re-structured by Menno Simons.

Smyth's move to Amsterdam and his growing discontent with certain aspects of Separatism have already been touched upon. The Mennonites influenced Smyth's view of the church to the extent that he no longer defined the Church as a body gathered together on the basis of a covenant.[39] By the time that Smyth drafted the 1610 Baptist Confession of Faith in Amsterdam, believer's baptism had replaced the covenant as the external sign of the gathered Church :

> "... Baptism is the external sign of the remission of sins, of dying, and of being made alive, and accordingly does not belong to infants.[40]

The acceptance of believer's baptism, though arguably a logical development of Separatist beliefs and earnest bible study, was a new perception and practice which other Separatists, whose association with the Mennonites was not so close, did not acquire. It was the acceptance of believer's baptism as a sign of a gathered church that inevitably led to the establishment of a new denomination, and the influence of the Mennonites in this regard should not be minimised.

An even more significant connection between the Baptists and the Mennonites was the desire of Smyth to unite his congregation with the Waterlander branch of the Mennonites.[41] The Waterlanders were Dutch Mennonites who disagreed with the strict discipline exercised by other Mennonite groups and were strongly represented in Central and Northern

---

38. See Hunter, op cit, p 68.

39. Cf Burgess, Smith the Se-Baptist, Thomas Helwys and the first Baptist Church in England, p 138 discussed in Robinson, op cit, p 63.

40. From the first Baptist Confession (which was written by Smyth in 1610), quoted by Robinson, ibid, p 63

41. See James R Coggins, "A Short Confession of Hans de Ries : Union and Separation in Early Seventeenth Century Holland" MQR 60:2 (1986) 128-138.

Netherlands, particularly in the two cities of Amsterdam and Alkmaar. Significantly, when Smyth first arrived in Amsterdam, he sought neither union with them nor baptism from them, because he supposed their views to be heretical. Further acquaintance, however, resulted in a very different perception.[42] In order to join this group, Smyth and his followers were required to sign the Confession drawn up by Hans de Ries. The ramifications of this document are of no direct concern here; what is important is that Smyth and forty-two members of his church did sign this Mennonite Confession.[43] Even though Smyth died in 1612, his congregation continued with their negotiations and union was finally achieved in 1615.[44]

Unlike Smyth, Helwys did not wish to merge with any of the Mennonite churches; he was determined to return with his followers to England. Nevertheless, he maintained contact with the Mennonites after his church's arrival in England. This continued association between the Mennonites and Helwys' church (even after his own demise) suggests that there was no out-and-out rejection of the Mennonites or of their theology by the early English Baptists.[45]

According to Hudson-Reed, the influence of the Mennonites is not simply restricted to the General Baptists. Drawing on the research of Glen Strassen, he argues that in addition to Calvinist, Separatist influences, the Particular Baptists' London Confession of 1644 shows remarkable dependence on Menno Simon's Foundation Book for its formulations concerning believer's baptism and the meaning of baptism in relation to the death, burial and

---

42. Cf B R White, The English Baptists of the 17th Century, p 25. See also J Coggins, "The Theological Positions of John Smyth" Bapt Q 30:6 (1984) 247-264 with rejoiners by S Brachlow, "John Smyth and the Ghost of Anabaptism" Bapt Q 30:7 (1984) 296-300 and B R White, "English Separatists and John Smyth revisited" Bapt Q 30:8 (1984) 344-347.

43. Cf Timothy George, "Between Pacifism and Coercion : The English Baptist Doctrine of Religious Toleration" MQR 1:58 (1984) p 35.

44. James D Mosteller supports the idea of the Mennonite influence on the General Baptists in "Baptists and Anabaptists I" The Chronicle (Jan 1957) pp 3-27 and "Baptists and Anabaptists II" The Chronicle (July 1957) 100-114.

45. Keith Sprunger discusses the ongoing contact between the English Baptists and Dutch Mennonites up to 1640 in "English Puritans and Dutch Anabaptists in early Seventeenth century Amsterdam" MQR 46 (1972) 113-128.

resurrection of Christ.[46]

Why, then, have the English Baptists sought to disassociate themselves from the Anabaptists?[47] One reason was the fear of persecution. There were also doctrinal disagreements such as the rejection of Hoffmannite Christology and the view that a Christian could be neither a magistrate nor participate in a war.[48] After the English adoption of immersion in 1644, all contact broke off as the English Baptists now regarded the Mennonites as unbaptised.[49] Up until very recently, the English Baptists have reflected the negative views of others regarding their own theological heritage. In their desire to win acceptance and respectability, the Edwardian English Baptists, for example, repudiated or minimised their association with the 16th century Anabaptists.[50]

In conclusion, then, South African Baptist writers have largely repeated earlier English Baptist views of their Anabaptist origins. Too much emphasis has been placed on the Baptists' Reformed and Separatist antecedents, and too little on their indebtedness to the Anabaptists. Only recently have a few South African Baptists reflected more up-to-date scholarship. As far as the vast majority of Baptist pastors and members are concerned, however, an entirely new perspective on their theological roots needs to be developed in which both the Separatist and Anabaptist roots are emphasised.[51] Significantly, at the Baptist Convention's workshop in 1990, one of the papers delivered was on the Anabaptists.[52] Only time will tell whether the Baptist Union will begin a similar search for their Anabaptist roots.

---

46. See Hudson-Reed, "Sixteenth Century Dutch Anabaptism" pp 215-229; he quotes G Strassen, "Anabaptist influence in the origin of Particular Baptists" MQR 36:4 (Oct 1962) pp 322 ff.

47. See James R Coggins, "The Theological Positions of the first English Baptists" The Baptist Quarterly 30 (1984) pp 13 ff.

48. Whitley, op cit, pp 32-4, 38, 45-58.

49. Vedder, op cit, p 209.

50. I Sellers, "Edwardians, Anabaptists and the problem of Baptist origins" Bapt Q 29 (1981) pp 97-112.

51. Cf Estep, "On the origins of the English Baptists" Bapt H & H 22 (April 1987) 19-26, esp p 23.

52. D Hunter "The Origin of Baptists with special reference to Anabaptists IN (eds) Hoffmeister and Gurney Barkley West, pp 14-18

B. THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS : A SOCIO-THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THEIR REFORMATION ROOTS.

Having examined the historical links between the English Baptists and the magisterial Reformers, Separatists, and Anabaptists, it is now necessary to embark upon a socio-theological analysis of the way in which South African Baptists have perceived their indebtedness to the Protestant Reformation.[53] It is argued below that insufficient attention has been accorded to the radical Reformation and that both Anabaptist and magisterial doctrinal affirmations have been abstracted from their social context and communicated to Baptist believers in a privatised form. It is not the concern of this analysis to enter into the many complex debates of Reformation studies. For Luther, Calvin, and the Anabaptists are not in themselves the object of this chapter. Rather, the focus of this study is on the way in which the South African Baptists have selected certain aspects of their Reformation heritage and interpreted it in a privatised way.

In order to trace the process of privatization, certain key theological concepts, namely the individual appropriation of salvation; Church, State and Baptism; the Rulers, the Magistracy and War; Religious and Political Liberty; and Mission and Social Ethics are discussed. These concepts have been chosen because they are central to Baptist theology.

1. The individual appropriation of salvation.

Luther and Calvin's perceptions of the inwardness of religion, the importance of a personal experience of God's grace, the authority of the Bible, and the priesthood of believers were essential elements of the Reformation. For them, faith was not a matter of complex scholastic formulation, still less of penances, fasts and pilgrimages; it was the individual's acceptance of God's gift of grace and the forgiveness made available through Christ's atoning death. This emphasis on the "righteousness of the heart" could, however, be misunderstood. Rather than enabling the individual to participate actively in society, it could degenerate into "ethical quietism" and privatization.[54] One factor that encouraged this development was the individualism of the Reformers' doctrines

---

53. As the Separatists were largely the bearers of the magisterial tradition, they are not accorded particular attention in this analysis unless this is deemed necessary.

54. Cf Villa-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar, p 40.

of sin, salvation and the Church :

> ...the Reformers focused nearly all of their attention upon man's sinful nature which makes him utterly helpless in the pursuit of the good. Consequently they came to rely almost exclusively upon the Pauline teachings regarding salvation of the individual sinner by faith, disclaiming even James's admonition to be doers of the Word as well as hearers. (55)

Whilst the privatised elements within the theologies of Luther and Calvin cannot be denied, it must be borne in mind that they were generally able to contain these and balance them with other elements within their theology, such as the social implications of this personal faith. But, all too often, their followers were unable to do this. A well known example is that of Luther's relationships with the princely rulers of his day. His vehement criticisms of them are subsumed by later Lutherans under his command that the rulers should be obeyed.(56) Another example is that whilst Luther emphasised that justification was by faith and not by works, and he referred to the epistle of James as "that epistle of straw", he also added "But if there be no works, there must be something amiss with faith".(57)

It is from the Reformers that the South African Baptists have drawn their individualism and their emphasis on a personal experience of grace and salvation. In this the South African Baptists are certainly closer to the magisterial Reformers than they are to the Anabaptists, who stressed the practical application of salvation to the Church as a community across territorial and class lines. Consequently, they seldom emphasise the communal outworking of a person's salvation. Such a tendency, Niebuhr has argued (in a different context), reflects middle-class interests and religious perceptions.(58) How, then, do the modern South African Baptists draw upon the theological legacy of these groups so as to arrive at a privatised view of the Christian faith? What elements of their disparate theological heritage have been selectively interpreted (or misinterpreted) and why?

---

55. Robert Friedmann, "The Doctrine of the Two Worlds" in (ed) Hershberger, The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottdale : Herald Press, 1975) pp 106-107 and 112.

56. Cf a most informative discussion of Luther vs Lutheranism in Ulrich Duchrow, Lutheran Churches : Salt or Mirror of Society? (Geneva : Lutheran World Federation. 1977).

57. Quoted by D Bosch, Transforming Mission : Paradigm shifts in Theology of Mission (Maryknoll : Orbis, 1991) p 245.

58. R Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, pp 80-89.

2. The Church, the State and Baptism.

The way in which the Church, the State and baptism were understood and inter-related forms a cardinal division between the magisterial Reformers on the one hand, and the Anabaptists on the other hand. Baptism is one of the main distinguishing features of the Baptist denomination, and it cannot be discussed as if it were an unimportant doctrinal peculiarity. Nor can it be isolated from the doctrine of the Church and the relationship between the Church and the State. Indeed, it is one of the central contentions of this chapter that, by wrenching baptism out of its social, historical and theological context, the South African Baptists have distorted and privatised it. In so doing, they have deprived themselves of the radical socio-political insights that have hitherto accompanied this doctrinal affirmation.

(a) The Magisterial Reformers : Church, State and Baptism.

During and after the Reformation, the essential conflict concerning baptism was not centred on its mode (affusion, immersion, etc) but on its ecclesiological and social meaning. It represented a radical understanding of the Church and it implied the replacement of the age-old Constantinian Church/State model (Corpus Christianum) with a new model, that of the Free/Voluntary Church Freiwilligkeitskirche or, more often, the (Corpus Christi).[59] Unlike the Anabaptists, the foremost magisterial Reformers, namely Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, all upheld the Constantinian model (though they disagreed on the precise way in which the Church should relate to the State). This model is named after the Emperor Constantine who regarded himself as head of both the Church and the State. In giving the protection of the State to Christianity in 313 he rendered it, deliberately or by default, captive to the State's authority. The Church, in turn, by legitimising the power of the State, created a new religio-political system and virtually bound itself to the interests of whoever controlled the State.[60]

By their continued adherence to this model, the magisterial Reformers opposed the Anabaptist demand for the radical separation between Church and State. Luther, in struggling to free believers from the Roman Catholic

---

59. Cf Donald F Durnbaugh, The Believer's Church, (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1968/1985) pp 26-33 and 64-105.

60. The origins and results of this Church/State collusion are discussed in H Cook, What Baptists Stand for, pp 182-211.

Church and Pontiff, bound himself and his followers to the "German" princes. Calvin and Zwingli, in turn, used the "secular power" of the magistrates to maintain their doctrinal formulations in the nascent reformed city-states.[61] Calvin put it like this :

> Yet civil government has as its appointed end, so long as we live among men, to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the position of the church ...[62]

Finally, the magisterial acceptance of the principle cuius regio eius religio meant that the territorial rulers inherited the position of dominance previously exercised by the Popes and Emperors.[63] At the end of the day, none of the magisterial Reformers escaped the confines of the Corpus Christianum. This Constantianism was clearly evidenced in the Reformers' support for the socio-religious institution that maintained this unity of Church and State, namely infant baptism. Despite earlier desires to do away with infant baptism, at least on the part of Luther and Zwingli,[64] and despite the differences between the sacramental theologies of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, they all maintained and defended the practice of infant baptism.[65] Luther, in his Larger Catechism of 1528, said that baptism brings "... victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, the grace of God, the entire Christ, and the Holy Ghost with all his gifts"; and yet, he maintained the practice of baptising undiscerning infants.[66] Zwingli said that :

> Baptism is not given to anyone unless he first confesses that he

---

61. For Zwingli, the final decision concerning the abolition of the mass and infant baptism was the responsibility of the city council, and not, as the Swiss Brethren insisted, the responsibility of the Church guided by the Bible.

62. My emphasis, Calvin, Institutes, IV, xx, 2. Views such as these legitimised brutal punishment meted out to the Peasants (1524-1525), the persecution of the Anabaptists, and led to the series of vicious "Religious" Wars that rent Europe apart in the 16th and 17th centuries.

63. This principle meant that the people of a specific region were to espouse the religion of the ruler of that region.

64. See Estep, Renaissance and Reformation, p 157-158 and The Anabaptist Story, p 14.

65. The debate between Huldreich Zwingli, Hübmaier and Grebel is discussed by Estep in Renaissance and Reformation, pp 210 ff and Estep, The Anabaptist Story, pp 11ff, 26ff and 59ff.

66. Quoted by Reardon, Religious Thought in the Reformation, p 77.

> has faith, if he is a grown person or unless he has the virtue of which he is counted a member of the Church, if he is a child.[67]

Calvin not only maintained the Roman practice of infant baptism but also devoted over fifty pages of argument in its defence.[68]

But why, given its inherent inconsistencies and the Anabaptist challenge, did the magisterial Reformers uphold infant baptism? Firstly, they realised that believer's baptism would mean the establishment of a Freiwilligkeitskirche and its resultant reduction of members.[69] Secondly, the magisterial Reformers were aware that the adoption of believer's baptism implied a sundering of the existing socio-political order in which infant baptism legitimised the socio-political status quo. Infant baptism was not simply a religious practice, it served the social function of binding all into a common socio-political order. Calvin, in particular, abhorred the idea of any further sundering of the unity of Christendom. This accounts for his invective against the "raving Catabaptists" who were critical of the institutional church.[70]

Given the fact that the magisterial Reformers resisted the separation between the Church and the State, how did they define the Church? For Luther and Calvin the Church was, essentially, made up of saved individuals. These could, however, not be distinguished from all those who were part of the institutional Church. Thus they both referred to the visible (local and institutional) and the invisible (true) Church. The Reformers regarded the "marks" of the Church as the pure preaching of God's Word, the lawful administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline.[71] Significantly, discipleship and evangelism (so greatly emphasised by the South African Baptists) are not specifically mentioned in this definition let alone the broader mission of the Church and its socio-political witness.

---

67. Zwingli, III : On the Providence of God (August 20 1530), "Infant Baptism", quoted by Ronald H Bainton, The Age of the Reformation (New York : van Nostrand, 1956) p 126 [my emphasis].

68. See Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion IV, xv, 1-22 and IV xvi, 1-32.

69. Luther, cited in Estep, Renaissance and Reformation, p 157.

70. Calvin, Institutes IV, i, 12-21 and IV xii, 12. See also Reardon, Religious Thought in the Reformation, pp 197 ff.

71. Calvin, Institutes, Prefatory address, para 6 and also IV, i, 7-14. Cf the 1530 Augsburg Confession (article vii) and the 1561 Belgic Confession (articles 27-29).

(b) The Anabaptists : Church, State and Baptism.

The magisterial Reformers radically differed from the Anabaptists whose theology caused them to reject the notion of a Volkskirche (national church) and espouse, in its place, the Freiwilligheitskirche.[72] For them, a person's religious beliefs must be freely arrived at and not dictated by the rulers. Their disapproval of the magisterial cuius regio eius religio was reflected in their preaching to all, irrespective of whether the region was considered Catholic or Protestant. Nor did they agree that ministers should be paid by the State, for this would mean that they would have to render unconditional obedience to it. Their rejection of the totalitarianism of the Constantinian model was based on their radically different understanding of the Church. The Church was to be voluntarily entered and it was not invisible but rather identifiable with a new, visible, and historical community :

> ... sixteenth century Anabaptists regarded the true church as a concrete expression of the "present kingdom of Christ which is being established in the midst of and alongside of the kingdom of this world; not ... deferred to some millennial future."[73]

All of this meant that the Church was to be radically separated from the world and, by definition, from the State as a worldly structure. This separation between the two was clearly enunciated by the Schleitheim Confession of 1527.[74]

The Anabaptists propounded a Corpus Christi to which only baptised believers belonged and which was not drawn from the mass of people who had been baptised as undiscerning infants.[75] For them, the baptism of infants, purely on the grounds that they had been born of "Christian" parents in a "Christian" state, was simply unacceptable. Until true repentance, love and a genuinely new Christian life were seen to be practiced, one could not speak of Christian faith at all :

---

72. Cf Franklin H Littell, "The Anabaptist Concept of the Church" in (ed) G Hershberger, The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, pp 119-134.

73. Villa-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar, p 61; Robert Friedmann, "The Doctrine of Two Worlds" and Franklin H Littell, "The Anabaptist concept of the Church" IN (ed) Hershberger, ibid, pp 105-134.

74. "On Separation from the World", The Schleitheim Confession (1527), quoted in C Villa-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar, p 71.

75. Cf the discussion of Sattler and Hübmaier's theology of baptism in Estep, Renaissance and Reformation, pp 199-211.

> The focus of the Christian life was not to be so much the inward experience of the grace of God, as it was for Luther, but the outward application of that grace to all human conduct and the consequent Christiani-zation of all human relationships. The true test of a Christian, they held, is discipleship. The great word of the Anabaptists was not "faith" as it was with the reformers, but "following" (Nachfolge Christi).[76]

Baptism was a symbol of this commitment to follow Christ and a means of entering his Church, therefore, infant baptism was both nonsensical and contrary to the Bible.[77] Baptism and discipleship belonged inescapably together.[78]

The Dutch Mennonites were faithful to these Anabaptist traditions and were largely responsible for passing them on to the English Baptists. The question is, do the South African Baptists uphold the radical social connotations of baptism?

(c) The South African Baptists : Church, State and Baptism.

Unlike Luther and Calvin, and analogous to the teaching of the Anabaptists, the South African Baptists do emphasise the principle of a Free Church and the practice of believer's baptism. Baptism is, for them, a very important aspect of their teaching, but, it is seldom understood to have radical social connotations. Debates with Paedo-Baptists centre around the ecclesiastical significance of baptism, rather than its social significance and its implied rejection of all forms of civil religion.

It is true that Ellis André briefly notes the social implications of baptism in his thesis, but this is an exception rather than the rule.[79] Parnell, for example, stresses the personal and ecclesiastical implications of baptism and entry into the church but makes no reference to the social

---

76. Harold S Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision" IN (ed) Hershberger, ibid, p 42. Cf also J N Jonsson, Nachfolge Christi (SA Baptist Historical Society, 1980).

77. Enormous stress was placed on the authority of the Bible - a stress much greater than that of the magisterial Reformers who, more than once, made appeals of expediency against the Bible, cf W Estep, The Anabaptist Story, pp 140-145.

78. Cf Michael Sattler's seven articles on baptism quoted by Ernest A Payne, The Baptist Movement in the Reformation and Onwards, p 13 & 21. Payne also discusses the impact of these articles on the English and American Baptists.

79. E André, op cit, pp 22-23.

implications of this act.[80] In the Baptist Blue-Print and a pamphlet printed by the Roodepoort Mission Press entitled "A command of Jesus Christ : Baptism" the same approach is evident, namely an exclusively individual and ecclesial discussion of baptism.[81] Certainly, in none of the many baptismal services which I have attended, has any mention been made of the social implications of this act. Baptism, because it has been separated from its historical and socio-political framework, has been privatised. It does not lead to a questioning of the principles that underlie the State, as it did for the Anabaptists.

But how could believer's baptism be practiced in the South African context, so that both its personal and social implications are expressed?

Firstly, the bold historical vision of the Anabaptists must not be restricted to the existential history of persons, but extend to the social context of individuals and groups. Baptists must bear practical witness to the principles of the Kingdom (or rule) of God which is already partly evident in history. For example, the enormous social divisions which exist between Baptists in this country should not be countenanced. Nor should the division and suspicion that exist between members of the Union and Convention be regarded as unimportant; they nullify the Baptists' claims to be a genuine Christian community.

Secondly, the anti-totalitarianism of the Anabaptist vision must be evidenced in the South African Baptist conception of Church/State relations. The South African Baptists, of all people, should be the ones most vehemently opposed to the evil outworking of the civil religion for so long practiced by the Dutch Reformed Church. They should be critical of churches that theologically legitimate unjust governmental structures or which uncritically reinforce the status quo.

Thirdly, the socio-economic implications of Christian community require emphasis and practical expression. Discipleship, or Nachfolge Christi, has implications for worship, fellowship and social concern. The spiritual oneness of the communion table must be given expression in the theology and activities of the church members both within an ecclesial and social context. Racism was not part of the context of the Anabaptists but classism certainly was. Significantly, the Anabaptists resisted this social division and placed an inordinate stress on the community aspect of their churches. But, even

---

80. Being a Baptist, p 44.

81. Baptist Blue-Print, p 47. See also the pamphlet on "Church Membership" (Roodepoort Mission Press) pp 10, 23-24.

were anything but systematic and that he used the doctrine in various ways. In essence, the Kingdom of God (regnum Dei) was opposed to the kingdom of the world in the sense of the fallen world or the kingdom of the devil (regnum diaboli). But the Kingdom of God was not simply in opposition to the world, because the world included both the regnum diaboli and the regnum terrena, the rule of God over the earth.[85] The Church is to have nothing to do with the regnum diaboli, but the Church should participate in the affairs of the world because God is also concerned with the world that God has created and seeks to save.

Calvin also spoke of a spiritual and a political kingdom (or spiritual and civil government) but in the refugee city of Geneva, he sought to build a theocratic, holy commonwealth in which the rule of God extended over all aspects of life.[86] Thus, in contrast to Luther, Calvin's concept of the law was much more prescriptive and he gained experience of practical politics in the dual governing of the city of Geneva by the Council (city magistrates) and the Consistory (ministers and preachers). This led, on the one hand, to the exercise of a legalistic and puritanical discipline over the city's inhabitants, and also to the development of a degree of negotiation and mutual settlement between the "spiritual" and "civil" authorities.[87]

Neither of the magisterial Reformers were uncritical of the rulers of their day. In the Admonition to Peace, for example, Luther said this concerning the Peasants' War :

> We have no one on earth to thank for this disastrous rebellion, except you princes and lords, and especially you blind bishops and mad priests and monks, whose hearts are hardened, even to the present day... as temporal rulers you do nothing but cheat and rob the people so that you may lead a life of luxury and extravagance. The poor people cannot bear it any longer.[88]

He also referred to the rulers as "knaves and fools" and was not loath to

---

85. Villa-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar, p 42.

86. Institutes, III, xix, 15; IV, xx, 1 (IV, xi, 1-16 constitutes Calvin's critique of Rome's abuse of its temporal authority, an abuse that the Reformers themselves did not completely evade). Cf W Niesel's discussion of Calvin and secular government in The Theology of Calvin (Grand Rapids : Baker, 1956) pp 229-245.

87. Cf Reardon, op cit, pp 167-172; Hans J Hillerbrand, The Reformation (Grand Rapids : Baker, 1964) pp 170-211 and Villa-Vicencio, op cit, pp 43-45.

88. Luther, Admonition to Peace (Works of Martin Luther, Vol 46: Philadelphia : Fortress, 1967) p 19.

when South African Baptists do emphasise discipleship and the Church as a community, this emphasis is not given actual expression. Love, righteousness, justice and reconciliation should not simply be terms that involve the individual and God, nor only the members of a single local church. Unless they are actively practiced within the total community, and especially outside one's own class, race and gender categories, they are not being practiced at all.

3. The Rulers, the Magistrates and War.

With respect to the rulers, magistrates and war, the South African Baptists follow the lead of the magisterial Reformers. Although they offer verbal critique of the rulers, essentially, they have lent support to the establishment. During this century they have not withdrawn support from the SADF, and have more often criticised the violence of those that resist unjust laws than the violence of those that enforce these laws. Unlike the Anabaptists, they have not espoused radical changes, either ecclesiastically or socially.

(a) The Magisterial Reformers : The Rulers, the Magistrates and War.

Any worthwhile discussion of the magisterial Reformers and the rulers must take cognisance of their understanding of the relationship between temporal and spiritual rule.[82] Luther, for example, made a distinction between temporal and spiritual government.[83] This "two kingdoms" doctrine was based on his perception that the confusion of the spiritual and the secular kingdoms, whether promoted by the Papacy or the Peasants, was "pernicious".[84]

The difficulty of grasping and applying Luther's "two Kingdoms" doctrine can be largely attributed to the fact that Luther's own writings

---

82. The definitive Augsburg Confession re-iterated this distinction between temporal and spiritual authority; see Villa-Vicencio, ibid, pp 47-48.82.

83. Luther, Temporal Authority : To what Extent it should be Obeyed? (Works of Martin Luther, Vol 45 : Philadelphia : Muhlenberg Press, 1962), pp 89 and 91.

84. Gordon Rupp, "Luther and Government" in (ed) H G Koenigsberger, Luther : A Profile, (New York : Hill and Wang, 1973) p 132.

pour scorn on their vanity. Calvin specified that the rulers should not be lazy or corrupt but "take care of their own common people, keep the public peace, protect the good, punish the evil" and remember that they would have to account to God for their manner of governing.(89) Both Luther and Calvin recognised that a Christian could not render total obedience to any ruler.(90) But this is not always how the magisterial Reformers, particularly Luther, have been understood, especially by 19th century German nationalists and many totalitarian governments. These distorted views interpret Luther like this :

> The essential meaning of religion and of the church could find expression only in the realm of private life, and even then only in personal relationships and within the family. The economic, scientific and public spheres of life were expected to be accepted and sanctioned automatically.(91)

Why have such interpretations emerged? Firstly, because corrupt and unjust governments have no wish to see the Church exercising its prophetic witness, they encourage and propagate such views. Secondly, as has already been argued, the Church has itself contributed to this distortion of its heritage by privatising its theology, and permitting this abuse of theology for the benefit of the ruling classes. A third reason lies in the indisputable fact that the magisterial Reformers remained tied to the Constantinian model and certainly did not encourage the critique of the rulers of their day. Indeed, their very understanding of justification by faith implied a personal form of salvation and an individualistic view of sin and righteousness. Their emphasis on obedience to rulers far outweighs their discussion of civil disobedience. Further, in giving the rulers the authority to punish "false" religion, they gave them a dangerous degree of power over the church, and by definition, over all those who were "religious". Luther, in particular, tended to abuse Romans 13, and, in his reaction to the Peasants' Revolt, provided the rulers with a justification for the brutal exercise of their temporal power.

The dire consequences of this perception were illustrated in the events

---

89. Institutes, IV, xx, 24; II, viii, 46.

90. Luther, Temporal Authority, p 125; Calvin, Institutes, IV xx, 30-32.

91. Duchrow, Lutheran Churches : Salt or Mirror of Society?, p 15 and 9-17. Cf also Ebling, ibid, pp 185 ff; Rupp, op cit, p 128 and Reardon, Religious Thought in the Reformation, pp 85-87 who argue that Luther's writings have been grievously misunderstood. See Troeltsch, op cit, pp 477-484, 540-544 and 575-576.

of the Peasants' War. The "Peasants' War" or revolt is the name given by historians to the events which took place between June 1524 and July 1525. But, to speak of a "peasant" revolt is probably a misnomer. Many of those that were involved were not serfs, but small land-holders or farmers and, even, artisans and craftsmen from the urban areas. Pressed upon from all sides by the nobility and the bishops, compelled to perform forced labour, denied access to land and rivers, ruined by war, taxes and drought, they had a view of the "freedom of a Christian" which differed enormously from that of Luther.

Although prior to the peasants' revolt Luther supported the liberty of conscience and indicated some support for the plight of the peasants, the events of 1524-1525 changed all this.(92) Significantly, Luther rejected the peasants' claim that their demands were based on Christian principles.(93) This reluctance to apply the principles of the Gospel to achieve social redress, together with his hatred and fear of "Sir Mob"(94), meant that when they most needed him, the peasants found themselves not only betrayed by him, but exposed to the wrath of the princes whom Luther himself had enjoined to "stab, smite and slay" them if they would not submit to their rulers.(95) Predictably, many of the "peasants" abandoned Luther and joined the diverse Anabaptist groups.(96) This tendency of Lutheranism to take on the character of a princes' reformation became even more pronounced after the overthrow of Münster. The religious needs and social ambitions of the disenfranchised were sacrificed for the sake of preserving the

---

92. Cf Cook, op cit, pp 193 ff. In writings such as The Freedom of a Christian, Luther had seemingly advocated a more egalitarian society. Also, in his Sincere Admonition to Peace : A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia, pp 22-23, Luther was initially sympathetic to many of the demands drawn up by the peasants.

93. Luther, Admonition to Peace, pp 35, 39-40.

94. Cf Luther's arguments against insurrection : A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to guard against Insurrection and Rebellion, Works of Martin Luther, Vol 45, pp 57-74, especially pp 61-65; Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants, Works of Martin Luther, Vol 46, pp 49-55; An Open Letter on the Harsh Book against the Peasants, ibid, pp 63-85.

95. Luther, Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants, pp 53-54.

96. Claus-Peter Clasen's analysis of the classes who supported Anabaptism supports the idea that it was a "people's movement". See his Anabaptism : A Social History (Ithaca : Cornell Univ Press, 1972) p 432.

traditional power of the secular princes.

Whose interests did the magisterial Reformers ultimately serve? Despite the criticisms of various rulers by Luther and Calvin, Lutheranism favoured the princely rulers whilst Calvinism increasingly favoured the magistrates and middle classes. In the churches of the disinherited, says Niebuhr, millenarianism, the practical benefits of religion and radical social transformation are emphasised, but "official Lutheranism became an established church, predominantly an aristocratic and middle-class party of vested interest and privilege."(97)

Anabaptism's popular character, its social radicalism, its insistence on believer's baptism and a holy, separate church simply filled Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, the German princes, and the city magistrates with horror.(98) Unfortunately, the peasants' uprising and the chaos of the Münsterite revolt (1534-1535), did nothing to dispel their fears. As a result, all Anabaptists were systematically and viciously rooted out of "Christian" Europe.(99) These actions were legitimised on the basis of the Reformers' view that the magistracy was a holy office through which God exercised justice.(100) The magistrates and rulers were empowered to put down all manner of civil and religious revolts (the two being seldom distinguished from each other).(101)

The positive aspect of the magisterial view concerning the social order was they did not advocate a withdrawal from society; rather Christians were instructed to occupy social offices. The negative aspect, however, lay in the nature of this societal involvement, which was not prophetic in character, and did not entail the radical re-structuring of society. Nor did Luther and Calvin deal with the matter that so greatly concerned the Anabaptists, namely that occupying social offices often caused one to act unjustly and, thereby, to disobey Christ. In effect, Luther was understood to mean that the two kingdoms had little to do with one another, an

---

97. Niebuhr, op cit, pp 31 and 37.

98. Niebuhr, op cit, pp 37-38.

99. John S Oyer, "The Reformers oppose Anabaptist Theology" IN (ed) Herschberger, op cit, pp 202-216, especially 215. See also R Krieder, "The Anabaptists and the State", ibid, pp 180 ff.

100. Institutes, IV, xi, 4 and IV, xx, 4, 9, 10.

101. With respect to war, the magisterial Reformers simply reiterated the classic just war argument. Cf Luther, Whether Soldiers, too, can be Saved?, p 130 and Calvin's Institutes, IV, xx, 11-13 & 31.

understanding which was to have disastrous consequences, since it encouraged the seclusion of the believer's religious faith within the private, personal realm.

(b) The Anabaptists : The Rulers, the Magistrates and War.

But how did the Anabaptists view the rulers? In contrast to the magisterial Reformers, the Anabaptists placed more emphasis on the limits of the authority of the State and its responsibility to protect its citizens.[102] From the very early beginnings of Anabaptism amongst the Swiss Brethren, there was a rejection of the magisterial Reformers' collusion with the "State" - at the expense of obedience to the Scriptures.[103] They were unwilling to make compromises with "the world" if it meant disobeying the Bible which they tended to interpret much more literally than the other Reformers. Their attitudes to rulers, and in particular their refusal to serve as magistrates, were the basis for their subsequent tribulation.

Whereas both Calvin and Luther regarded the magistracy as a high and even sacred office, the Schleitheim Confession of 1527 (written after the Peasant's War) saw it as being "outside the perfection of Christ" and they considered it inappropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate.[104] It was the Anabaptists' perception of the world's evil, the abuse of the magistracy, and the brutal aftermath of the Peasant's War that led them to reject the possibility of serving as magistrates and soldiers.[105] More than anyone else, the Anabaptists experienced the bitter consequences of unjust laws and executions - often carried out by "reformed" magistrates. Further, their rejection of the use of the sword meant that the magistracy, especially as it was practiced in the 16th century, was irreconcilable with their understanding of what it meant to be a Christian :

The magistrate often performed the functions of judge, jury, and

---

102. Cited in Estep, The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, p 195 (and p 57 with reference to Hübmaier).

103. Cf Estep, ibid, pp 11 ff.

104. The Schleitheim Confession, quoted in Villa-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar, p 73. See also Burkholder, "The Anabaptist Vision of Discipleship" in (ed) Hershberger, op cit, p 140.

105. This rejection of the magistracy as an office which a Christian could hold is found in the Schleitheim Confession (1527), Hans Denck's "Concerning True Love" (1527) and Pilgram Marpeck's "Confession" (1532) - all are quoted by Villa-Vicencio, ibid, pp 71-76.

> executioner without the slightest semblance of justice. He played God in realms where he had no jurisdiction. He was more often than not the tool of a corrupt state and degenerate church. Love could not possibly motivate the actions of such a man.[106]

The Anabaptists also shunned all use of force, advocated non-resistance and insisted that the Gospel was to be obeyed in all areas of life.[107] For this reason they also refused to take the civic oath, both because it was superfluous to Christ's command always to tell the truth, and because they foresaw that in taking this oath they might be called upon by the civic authorities to act in a way contrary to their faith.[108]

This raises the question, did the Anabaptists retreat into a privatised, personal spirituality? Aspects of the Anabaptist movement were dualistic, but the movement as a whole favoured neither a spiritualization of the Gospel nor an individualistic emphasis. Certainly there was an element of withdrawal, for, according to J Burkholder, their stress on non-resistance was not just a rejection of war :

> It implied a general attitude of social and political indifference and eventually a practical program of withdrawal from certain comprehensive structures of society which were grounded in force. Most notable is the attitude of the Anabaptists toward the office of the magistracy and the rejection of entire dimension of political life.[109]

However, it must be recognised that the Anabaptists' withdrawal was partly based on the fact that they were given no opportunity to practice their distinctive beliefs within the existing social reality. From the very beginning of Swiss Anabaptism in 1525, for example, they were maligned, rejected and brutally persecuted. Their experience of the magistracy was not exactly calculated to inspire them to trust and defend it. In addition, their rejection of the evil of the world and its structures was not a withdrawal into a personal spiritual mysticism but, as is shown in relation

---

106. Estep, The Anabaptist Story, p 191-192 and p 72. An exception is Balthasar Hübmaier's "Concerning the Sword" (1527), in which he does allow a Christian to "bear the sword in God's stead", see Villa-Vicencio, ibid, p 74.

107. H Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision" in (ed) Hershberger, op cit, pp 51 ff.

108. Calvin discusses this issue of the civic oath in his Institutes II, viii, 26 & 27.

109. J L Burkholder, "The Anabaptist Vision of Discipleship" in (ed) Hershberger, op cit, pp 142-143.

to their social ethics below, a deliberate decision to live as an alternative, witnessing community. The radical social relevance of the Anabaptist movement can also be seen in relation to the events of the Peasant's War. Prior to the mid-1970's, the Marxist interpretation of Anabaptism, especially as advanced by W Zimmermann, which regarded Thomas Müntzer as the father of Anabaptism and the leader of the Peasants' revolt, was considered to be faulty.(110) It was also argued that the tendency of the magisterial Reformers not to distinguish between the various (violent and pacifist) Anabaptist groups needed to be corrected.(111) More recently, new research has presented a somewhat different picture.

James M Stayer has argued that although the Anabaptist movement and the Peasants' revolt cannot be completely identified with each other, the view of Claus-Pieter Clasen that there was no significant link between the two must be rejected.(112) Many, although certainly not all, of the Anabaptist leaders were directly or indirectly involved with the revolt of the rural peasants, miners and urban workers against the social structures of their time. Swiss Anabaptists such as Grebel opposed the oppressive system of tithes and zins contracts, and several of the Zürich radicals who had opposed Zwingli on the issue of infant baptism were part of the revolt in the upper Rhine and Swabian regions. In addition Balthasar Hübmaier, Hans Hut, Melchior Rinck, to mention but a few Anabaptist leaders, definitely participated actively in the revolt.(113)

In short, the Anabaptists were critical of the rulers and magistrates and those Anabaptists who participated in the Peasants' War did so because they supported the vision of ecclesiastical and social transformation.

---

110. See the discussion in A Friesen, "The Marxist Interpretation of Anabaptism" 16th C Journal 1 (1970) pp 17-34 and Estep, Renaissance and Reformation, pp 140-146.

111. Even Calvin, who as a result of his contact with Bucer and the time he spent in Strasbourgh should have known better, failed to distinguish between the Nicodemites, Libertines, Anabaptists and anti-Trinatarians, in his Psychopannysia - cf G H Williams, The Radical Reformation, pp 580 ff.

112. Stayer, "Anabaptism and future Anabaptists in the Peasants' War" MQR 62:2 (april 1988) 99 ff.

113. Stayer, ibid, pp 105-135.

(c) The South African Baptists : The Rulers, the Magistrates and War.

Finally, what do the South African Baptists have to say about the rulers, magistrates and war? A number of statements have been issued by annual Assemblies against aspects of the government's policies and there can be little doubt that there are Baptist ministers who are critical of the "rulers". But, there are also those who have been uncritical of the government and regard "politics" as something completely unrelated to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, though in theory Baptists are quick to say that "we will be subject to the rulers only in the Lord", there is very little conception, especially at congregational level, of the injustices that the rulers are perpetrating. Baptists only invoke Acts 5.29 if they feel that they are no longer free to "preach the Gospel"; but because "the Gospel" is so narrowly conceived, this passage is rarely invoked. The thought that the South African government, especially during the heyday of Apartheid, did not prevent the pietistic preaching of the Gospel precisely because it supplied the "opium" that averts the eyes of Christians from the evil of the rulers has, apparently, not occurred to many Baptists.

In South African Baptist circles, the Free Church principle and the Baptists' historic critique of the rulers are often misunderstood. The Anabaptists refused to swear the civil oath and to serve as magistrates because of their perception of the way in which these were abused by the civil authorities. They regarded withdrawal as a necessary act to affirm their adherence to the commands of Christ. But, in the South African context, the Free Church principle is often understood to mean that the Church and State are entirely separate and that neither one can instruct or challenge the other. This is particularly true of the "right-wing" group within the Baptist Union. At the 1988 Baptist Assembly a member church put forward this motion :

> The fundamental Baptist principle of the separation of Church and State must, by definition, mean that the two bodies are different in function (though both are appointed by God). Just as the State has no business to dictate to the Church how she ought to conduct her affairs, so the Church has no mandate to prescribe to the State authorities the manner in which they must rule.(114)

Such a view gives rise to a kind of separation between Church and State that has the character of acquiescence to the rulers rather than the proclamation

---

114. Cf the Documented Agenda prepared for discussion at the King William's Town Baptist Union Assembly, p 37.

of a new order under the Kingdom of God expressed as a social reality within the Church as a new community.

In his thesis, Ellis André has pointed out that a variety of views concerning Church/State relations pertains within the Baptist Union. He notes that "the great similarity between Lutheran and Baptist approaches is the tendency towards a quietistic dualism".[115] He goes on to note that Baptists follow Abraham Kuyper's version of Calvinism in which "the church as institution ought not to involve itself in the affairs of the state. Individual Christians should however become politically active and may even establish their own party."[116] According to a questionnaire which he conducted in 1983, 12% of the ministers regarded the Church and State as "separate spheres" of activity; 50% stated that the "church should stay out of politics" but that individual Christians may engage in political statements and action; only 21% supported some form of prophetic role.[117]

Finally, the Baptist Statement of Principle issued in October 1987 affirmed :

> The principle of SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE in that, in the providence of God, the two differ in their respective natures and functions. The Church is not to be identified with the State nor is it, in its faith or practice, to be directed or controlled by the State. The State is responsible for administering justice, ensuring an orderly community, and promoting the welfare of its citizens. The Church is responsible for preaching the Gospel and for demonstrating and making known God's will and care for all mankind.[118]

The final clause of this statement is extremely vague and does not make clear what the response of the Church (both as a community and as individual believers) should be when the Church perceives the State to be failing in its task.

Admittedly, the context within which the South African Baptists operate is very different to that within which Anabaptism and the English Baptist churches took root. Officially, there is no State Church. However, as documents such as The Message to the People of South Africa (1968), the Kairos Document (1985) and Evangelical Witness (1986) show, there certainly

---

115. Ellis André "The Baptist Understanding of the relationship between Church and State..." op cit, p 10.

116. Ibid, p 13.

117. Ibid, pp 81 ff.

118. See the Appendix, Enclosure 3.

is a State Theology. But where is the recognition, let alone criticism, of this fact by the local white South African churches? With regard to the use of force and military service, the South African Baptists resemble the magisterial Reformers more closely than they do the Anabaptists. Baptist support for the government extends to the Defence Force, those Baptists who question military conscription and service being in the minority.[119] The simple fact is that the local Baptist churches in South Africa have not been in the forefront of the struggle against the unjust rulers and their policy of Apartheid.

In theory, the South African legal system probably bears little resemblance to the autocratic and all-powerful magistrates who dealt so summarily with the Anabaptist dissidents. However, in view of the multitude of unjust laws promulgated by successive white governments over the past 300-odd years, and the practice of detention without trial (especially since 1948), all of which constitute an extensive abrogation of the law, in practice the legislative, judicial and security machinery facing South African "dissidents" in recent years has all too painfully resembled that of the rulers and magistrates of the 16th and 17th centuries.

4. Religious and Civic Liberty.

Up until the Reformation, Europe was a single socio-religious entity. Any religious innovations, thus, had immense socio-political and (because of compulsory tithing) economic implications.

(a) The Magisterial Reformers : Religious and Civic Liberty.

The magisterial Reformers sought religious liberty for themselves and spent much time defending their reformed doctrines against their critics. Luther resisted the attempts of the Pope to silence him and wrote a long essay on "The Freedom of a Christian". As late as 1525, in a letter to Carlstadt, Luther said "I will preach, I will talk, I will write, but I will constrain no man with violence, for faith is by nature voluntary and uncompelled."[120] Luther was determined, however, to deny religious liberty to others. He condemned the "Zwickau Prophets" as fanatics and deceivers. After the events of the Peasants' Revolt, he denied the voluntary

---

119. See chapter 7.

120. Quoted by Cook, What Baptists Stand For, p 193.

nature of religion by accepting the principle cuius regio eius religio at the Diet of Speyer (1526). It is noteworthy that, despite Luther's copious invective regarding the untrustworthiness of all princes, he nevertheless entrusted the Reformation's continuance to them, calling on them to be the guardians of the reformed churches in their regions and to lead the resistance to Rome.(121)

A similar pattern can be perceived in the Protestant cities of Zürich and Geneva. In his "Prefatory Address" to Francis I of France, Calvin made an impassioned plea on behalf of the "persecuted Evangelicals" and wrote about the "Freedom of a Christian" in his Institutes.(122) Under Calvin and Zwingli, however, the "religious" freedom within these cities was massively circumscribed by their own theological interpretations and the wishes of the city magistrates. They called upon the secular arm of the magistrates to enforce their reformed doctrine and, by implication, root out all those who challenged their doctrinal formulations and threatened this new Church/State relationship. Consequently, in Zürich, the Anabaptists (in a malicious parody of their beliefs) were sentenced to be drowned, whilst in Geneva, Servetus was burned.(123) The magisterial Reformers joined forces with the Catholics to deal with the Anabaptists who preached their "nefarious" doctrines everywhere, threatening the new, and very delicate, balance of power in Europe. Consequently, they were brutally persecuted.(124)

(b) The Anabaptists : Religious and Civic Liberty.

The Anabaptists' views on religious liberty were strikingly different to those of the magisterial Reformers and their successors. From their earliest beginnings, the Anabaptists desired the freedom to practice their religious faith by baptising only believers and living out the radical social implications of their faith. They were even willing to accord freedom of

---

121. Luther, To the Christian Nobility, p 156.

122. "Prefatory Address" , pp 9-14 and Calvin's discussion of "Christian Freedom" in the Institutes, III, xix, 1-16 especially 14.

123. Discussed by Cook, op cit, p 195 ff.

124. See the chilling descriptions of Estep, The Anabaptist Story, pp 40-71 and (ed) J Hillebrand, The Reformation, pp 214-297.

religion to the Turks, an unprecedented opinion for that time.[125] Their belief in religious liberty was based on their rejection of Constantinianism and their consistent application of the Reformation principle of the necessity for a voluntary and personal appropriation of God's grace through faith. Probably the most incisive defence of the principle of religious liberty issued from the pen of Balthasar Hübmaier. In Concerning Heretics and those who burn them, he stressed that coercion of belief was contrary to the very essence of the Gospel and the nature of the Church. Even atheists were to be accorded the freedom to "forsake the Gospel".[126]

(c) The South African Baptists : Religious and Civic Liberty.

One of the common weaknesses of the social theology of the South African Baptists is revealed in their failure to recognise the inter-relationship between religious and political liberty. It is not sufficient for South African Baptists to affirm the non-negotiability of religious freedom, they must regard civic and religious liberties as indivisible.

In the August 1960 SA Baptist, Theodore Adams defined freedom of religion as follows :

> By this we mean not only freedom to worship, but also freedom to teach and preach... freedom to change one's faith, freedom to print and publish our convictions, and to own property and build churches in which to worship and serve the Lord.[127]

This circumscribed view of religious liberty is repeated in the South African Baptist's Statement of Principles :

> ... no individual should be coerced by the State or any secular, ecclesiastical or religious group in matters of faith. The right of private conscience is to be respected. For each believer this means the right to interpret the scriptures responsibly and to act in the light of his conscience.[128]

In other words, religious liberty is affirmed, but it is isolated from civic liberty. The Baptists say "yes" to the freedom of religion, but this kind of religious liberty bears little resemblance to the religious liberty fought for by their ancestors in the faith. The scriptures are interpreted in terms of the "spiritual" needs of the individual and conscience is understood in

---

125. This was a view expressed by Michael Sattler at his trial; see Estep, Renaissance and Reformation, pp 202-230.

126. Estep, Renaissance and Reformation, p 209.

127. SA Baptist (Aug 1960) p 1.

128. See the Appendix, Enclosure 3.

an a-political sense. There has been no active engagement with vital issues such as military conscription; legal representation; detention without trial; political representation; and equal access to the economy. It may be that the political "dissenters" of today more closely resemble the Anabaptists than do the South African Baptists themselves.

5. Mission and Social Ethics.

In terms of their great stress on evangelism, the South African Baptists do resemble the Anabaptists. However, unlike the Anabaptists, the South African Baptists have not consistently espoused a broad view of mission that encompasses a community and social ethic.

(a) The Magisterial Reformers : Mission and Social Ethics.

The magisterial Reformers understanding of the mission of the Church was very limited. They did not define the Church in terms of its mission to the world but in terms of its internal "marks". As a result, the Reformation never resulted in an outpouring of people into "foreign" mission. Moreover, as the colonies of their time were controlled by Catholic Spain and Portugal, all Protestants were excluded. Except for Calvin's one attempt to send twelve missionaries to Brazil, until the acquisition of colonies by the Protestant countries and the Evangelical revival of the 18th century, mission was either embarked upon by the Jesuits and Moravians or not embarked upon at all.[129]

Because the magisterial Reformers thought in terms of "Christian Europe", they saw little or no need for evangelism. This was one of the reasons that they regarded the "re-baptism" of the Anabaptists with such horror. Though they were aware that not all "Christians" were equally pious, as far as they were concerned, all infants were to enter the Church through baptism and everyone in the parish was, by definition, part of the Church. Calvin was, however, concerned that Christians should be members of the renewed Church and to achieve this aim he sent preachers all over Europe to spread the Reformed doctrines.

What of social ethics? Luther interested himself in social affairs and

---

129. Cf D Bosch, Witness to the World (London : Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980), pp 120-139. In his Transforming Mission : Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission (Maryknoll : Orbis, 1991) Bosch argues that there were missionary elements in Luther and Calvin's thinking but that these did not find practical expression, see pp 239 ff.

this concern was clearly evidenced in his writings concerning simony, pilgrimages, schools, commerce and public morals.[130] Christians did have a secular calling, indeed, according to Luther they could be farmers, craftsmen, magistrates, soldiers and even hangmen. However, Luther's understanding of the Christian's social responsibility did not extend to the transformation of the structures of society.

Luther was vulnerable to religious individualism because of his very social circumstances. Unlike Zwingli, he had little direct influence over a particular magisterial district and, unlike Calvin, he was not compelled to develop a social theology that could legislate for an entire city. Luther operated within a patchwork of principalities over which he had no direct authority and some of which were openly hostile to his new ideas.

Calvin's discussion of salvation, redemption and reconciliation in his Institutes focused on the individual's relationship to God, and he saw Christ's kingship as a spiritual kingship.[131] Discussion of structural sin and the social implications of salvation were virtually absent. Calvin, it is true, did speak of the needs of the poor and the necessity for the Church to provide for these needs. But he was treating symptoms rather than causes. His most influential book, the Christian Institutes, contains only a few pages on Civil Government. In it, the Kingdom was not regarded as in the process of realization, but as an entirely future hope. He was also quite happy to speak of the static "ranks and stations" of men.[132]

(b) The Anabaptists : Mission and Social Ethics.

The Anabaptists had a very different understanding of the Church's mission to that of the magisterial Reformers. Because they had no sympathy with the Constantinian idea that Europe had been "Christianised" centuries before, and because of their views on the Church and baptism, they stressed evangelism. Whilst the magisterial Reformers regarded the Great Commission as being restricted to the New Testament period, the Anabaptists literally

---

130. Cf To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate (1520).

131. Calvin, Institutes, II, xv-xvii and III, ix-xiv.

132. Calvin, Institutes, III, xx, 43 and II, viii, 46.

obeyed this commandment.[133] Every believer saw him or herself as an evangelist.[134] Hounded from place to place, these itinerant evangelists achieved incredible successes, comparable only to the very apostles whom they earnestly sought to emulate.[135]

Their evangelism was not of the pietistic, individualistic type. Menno Simons instructed his people as follows :

> ... this is the task to which you are called : namely, to chastise and punish, in the true fear of God with fairness and true Christian discretion, manifest criminals, such as thieves, murderers, Sodomites, adulterers, sorcerers, the violent, highwaymen, robbers, etc. Your task is to do justice between a man and his neighbor, to deliver the oppressed out of the hand of the oppressor ...[136]

Because of the Lordship of Jesus, life in this new community had very definite ethical implications. Christ's example had to be followed and his commandments obeyed.[137] This concept of discipleship accounts not only for the exemplary lives of the Anabaptists, but also for their emphasis on the "brotherhood". Nor did this emphasis on "brotherhood" exclude women. Unlike the Lutherans and Calvinists, who failed to extend their ecclesiastical innovations to the low status and circumscribed roles of women, many Anabaptists applied their ideas to the position of women.[138] During the 16th century, many Anabaptist women were martyred, a few wrote books or hymns, and some helped to establish churches. Though the biblicism of the male leaders of the movement prevented new theological perceptions concerning women from developing, women played a marked role in promoting and deepening the experience of the Gemeinde (congregational fellowship) and they were very effective lay witnesses. During periods of intense persecution women became leaders and teachers of Anabaptist groups.

---

133. J D Graber, "Anabaptism expressed in Mission and Social Service", IN (ed) Hershberger, op cit, p 154.

134. J L Burkholder, "The Anabaptist Vision of Discipleship" IN (ed) Hershberger, ibid, p 138.

135. Graber, IN (ed) Hershberger, op cit, pp 161-162.

136. M Simons, "Foundation" (1539) quoted by Villa-Vicencio, op cit, p 75.

137. W Estep, The Anabaptist Story, p 147. See also John H Yoder, "The Prophetic Dissent of the Anabaptists" in (ed) Herschberger op cit, p 99.

138. See (ed) Richard L Greaves, Triumph over Silence : Women in Protestant History (London: Greenwood Press, 1985) pp 13-74.

The Anabaptist' emphasis on discipleship extended far beyond private religion or purely individual morality. The idea of Christian discipleship without a community committed to each other was, for the Anabaptists, inconceivable. Significantly, their "brotherhood" was marked by an absence of class distinctions :

> there were peasants, craftsmen, merchants, engineers, and learned professors among them ... The religious life of the group seems not to have been affected significantly by occupational and economic differences.(139)

For them, the Church was indeed a community and not just a group of individuals that were "spiritually" bound to each other. Consequently, the sharing of possessions and the willingness to aid anyone within their community was characteristic of these radical 16th century Christians. As part of their "ordination" into the community they were required to promise to devote their possessions to the community.(140) This sharing did not always take the form of the rejection of private property, but in the case of groups such as the Hutterites, it certainly did.(141)

Nor did the Anabaptists believe in a closed "brotherhood". The Gospel was not only to be fully experienced within the community but also expressed to those outside of this community. Besides their evangelism, their witness took two forms : on the one hand they lived exemplary lives (even their worst enemies attested to this) and on the other hand, they lived out a life of love in relation to their neigbours.

Despite their extraordinary witness, or perhaps because of it, the Anabaptists were mercilessly persecuted. There was no attempt to distinguish between the teachings and followers of Grebel, Hübmaier, Sattler, Marpeck, Müntzer and Jan van Leyden; none were spared the rigours of persecution. The intensity of this persecution and the consequences of the siege and fall of Münster, encouraged their withdrawal from societal affairs :

> Prolonged persecution dulled the missionary edge of the movement. The Anabaptists appeared to become gradually more quietistic in their attitudes towards government. They, of course, continued vigorously to defend their nonconformist ways. All that they

---

139. J W Fretz, "Brotherhood and the Economic Ethic of the Anabaptists" IN (ed) Hershberger, op cit, p 195.

140. Graber, op cit, p 163 and Fretz, op cit, p 195.

141. Fretz, ibid, pp 194-201. The Hutterites had an efficient system of primary schools, a high standard of sanitation, excellent medical practitioners and enormous pride in their agriculture and trades, see Estep, The Anabaptist Story, pp 89-107 and 101-103.

asked of governments was to be left alone to be "quiet in the land".[142]

Compared to Luther and Calvin, then, the Anabaptists did advocate a measure of withdrawal from society. But this was largely forced upon them and, as a result, their distinctive contributions to the understanding of the Church, their non-resistance, their genuine community life and their practical advances in the area of crafts, agriculture and education were ignored or even destroyed. Who knows what effect the Continental Anabaptists could have had if they had been permitted to flourish and to influence the social structures of their day?

(c) The South African Baptists : Mission and Social Ethics.

Like the Anabaptists, the South African Baptists put a great deal of emphasis on evangelism. Unlike the Anabaptists, however, their evangelism tends to be of a pietistic, privatised type.[143] Evangelism and the saving of the lost, far outweighs any stress on the social implications of sin and salvation. In addition, because the Kingdom of God is largely understood as a future reality (the Anabaptists regarded it, in some sense, as a present reality), there is a tendency to concentrate on evangelism, worship and personal spiritual growth and to await God's future establishment of the Kingdom.

To say this is not to discount the many resolutions submitted to the government by various Baptist Assemblies. These have dealt with a number of issues including alcohol abuse, gambling, political representation for blacks, race relations and injustice. What is at issue here is not the limited, verbal critique that has been addressed to the government. The vital issue is the extent to which the local Baptist churches are seen to be involved in putting into practice the theological issues raised at these Assemblies. It is at this level that the denomination reveals its privatization most blatantly.

Thus, despite the concern of the South African Baptists for moral matters, their concern tends to be an individualistic one. As Reinhold Niebuhr so aptly reminds us, a moral person does not automatically transform

---

142. Robert Krieder, "The Anabaptists and the State" IN (ed) Hershberger, op cit, p 188.

143. Cf L Kretzschmar, "Pietism, Politics and Mission : An examination of the views and activities of the South African Baptists" Miss 17:2 (1989) pp 103-114.

an unjust social system.[144] The vast majority of South African Baptists pursue a spirituality in which Christian morality is not applied to social structures and laws. Further, the South African Baptist churches are deeply divided by racism and there is little evidence of the type of community life practiced by the Anabaptists or concern about the limited opportunities and rights of black Baptist "brothers and sisters". They are neither actively involved in society, nor is their withdrawal from the political realm a commitment to an active, caring Christian community that includes black Christians. Theirs is a false spirituality of the individual person.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the preceding discussion is that the South African Baptists have emphasised their dependence on the magisterial Reformers and Separatists, and either ignored or neglected their Anabaptist roots.

Secondly, even though they acknowledge their indebtedness to the magisterial Reformers, they have diluted, even distorted, their teachings. Thus, Luther and Calvin's critique of the rulers has been muted or ignored. The magisterial Reformers' consciousness that the inwardness of religion does not imply withdrawal from the social realm of existence is not reflected in South African Baptists' references to their theology. In contrast to the community stress of the Anabaptists, the South African Baptists have appropriated the magisterial Reformer's emphasis on a personal faith and the personal experience of salvation. But they have transformed it into an individualistic stress on personal religious knowledge and fulfillment. In other words, individualism has led to withdrawal, and withdrawal has resulted in a Church acquiescent to the State.

A third conclusion is that the South African Baptists have reflected distorted Protestant, Catholic and English Baptist views concerning the Anabaptists. Despite the large volume of research on the Anabaptists made available this century, South African Baptist leaders, let alone ordinary members, have not exhibited an awareness of these new perceptions concerning the Anabaptists. Consequently, South African Baptists have not realised the extent to which their theology is rooted in the Anabaptist tradition. There is as urgent necessity for Baptists to re-discover their socio-theological heritage. This heritage contains a radical tradition which could throw a great deal of light on the contemporary situations facing South African Baptists.

---

144. Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, pp ix-xxv.

Fourthly, in spite of the South African Baptists' strong affirmation of believer's baptism, they have taken this distinctively Anabaptist doctrinal affirmation out of context. Their practice of baptism is not accompanied by a recognition that commitment to the Church of Christ implies a rejection of the distortions of the theology promulgated by the State. The institutionalized evil of the "rulers" is seldom questioned, let alone actively opposed. Thus, even though in theory the South African Baptists espouse the principle of a Free Church, this denomination's witness and impact on the State is extremely circumscribed. Moreover, the fact that religious liberty is blithely conceived within the Baptist Union as something entirely separate from political liberty, reveals an extensive (or deliberate) ignorance of their own theological roots.

Fifthly, South African Baptists have revealed an inability to practice a form of community life that moves beyond the lines of race and culture. Local Baptist understandings of mission and social ethics are extremely limited and do not reflect the Anabaptist concern that religious faith and social ethics are indivisible. This has rendered the Baptist Union largely irrelevant and ineffective in the modern South African social context.

****

CHAPTER 4

THE ENGLISH BAPTIST ROOTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS.

The previous chapter showed that the South African Baptists have variously neglected, diluted and distorted their Protestant Reformation heritage. The purpose of this chapter is to indicate that a similar process has taken place in respect of their English Baptist roots. Again, only certain (privatised) aspects of this rich English Baptist heritage have been stressed, whilst many of its socially radical elements have been virtually ignored. This chapter does not embark upon a rigorous discussion of the complex history of the English Baptists, but it does seek to note its general trends and point out what the (white) South African Baptist interpretations have omitted.

But first, what was the context within which the witness of the English Baptists developed?

England, between the 16th and 19th centuries, was a country characterised by intense religious turmoil and social conflict. As on the European continent, the struggle for power between the various groups was characterised by a complex combination of political, religious and socio-economic issues. One element was the political struggle which raged between the monarchs and Parliament. Another was the ongoing conflict between the Anglicans and the diffuse, but growing, Puritan and Separatist movements. The Puritans sought to reform the Church of England from within, but the Separatists, and later the Baptists, endeavoured to form entirely new and separate congregations. There was also an economic struggle for the control of the land and, later, the burgeoning manufacturing industries and overseas trade. These elements formed a complex matrix of personal and social rivalries.

It was during the rule of James I (1603-1625) that the first English Baptist churches were actually established. The Baptists slowly grew in number during the ill-fated reign of James's second son Charles I (1625-1645). Given respite from persecution, these churches flourished during the Civil War and the Protectorate of Cromwell (1642-1660), only to be brought under Monarchical rule again by Charles II (1660-1685). Two and a half decades later, seeking to advance the Catholic cause, James II (1685-1688)

briefly lifted the burden from the backs of the dissenters, only to be ousted by William and Mary (1688) before the Baptists could benefit from his policy. Under the Toleration Act of 1689, the very severe penalties against dissenters were lifted. But, they still had to pay tithes and church dues to the established (Anglican) church and they could not hold military, naval, legal or municipal offices. Further, their meeting places could not be licensed unless the oaths of supremacy and allegiance were taken.(1) In short, this Act was a mechanism of social control which allowed dissenters freedom of worship but excluded them from political life.(2) Only in the nineteenth century were these restrictions on dissenters finally lifted.(3)

The victory of the Anglican establishment over the dissenters was won at great cost. Not only had it resisted the force of much needed socio-economic and religious changes, but it had broken the spirit of those who were, arguably, its most loyal and able citizens. Henceforth, the secularization of England was exemplified by a growing contempt for the clergy and an increasing divorce between socio-economic realities and the theology of the religious establishment.(4)

In order to highlight the various elements of the English Baptist heritage, the following periods are examined : the radicalism of the 17th century; the decline and insularity of the 18th century; the revival and missionary activity that marked the years 1770-1820; and the internal growth and increased Baptist social involvement of the period between 1820-1899. In the final subsection, the South African Baptists' interpretation of their English Baptist roots is analysed. Their awareness of, and interest in, each of these periods is noted to ascertain the origins and development of the privatization of the Christian faith amongst local Baptists from 1820 onwards.

---

1. R B White, The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century (London : The Baptist Historical Society, 1983) p 137.

2. C Hill, The Century of Revolution, (London : Thomas Nelson, 1961) p 246.

3. Cook, What Baptists stand for (London : Carey Kingsgate, 1961) p 209.

4. C Hill, op cit, pp 245, 249, 291-2 and R H Tawney Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1922/1926) pp 178-197.

A. THE RADICAL 17TH CENTURY ENGLISH BAPTIST TRADITION, (1612-1689).

During the 17th century, England was profoundly shaken by the English Revolution, a process in which the Baptists played a small but not inconspicuous part.[5] The social radicalism of these English Baptist pioneers was not restricted to the events of the Civil War and the subsequent Protectorate; Baptists were also active in the periods that both preceded and followed the Civil War. Their social radicalism was prompted by two significant factors : their continued adherence to aspects of their Anabaptist heritage, and the marginalised social status of the majority of Baptist adherents. The first led them into conflict with the established powers, the second prevented Baptist social mobility and the complacency that results from inclusion in the establishment.

1. From Helwys to the English Civil War (1612-1642).

As noted in chapter three, Smyth established the first English Baptist church in Amsterdam in 1608. However, the first Baptist church on English soil was indisputably the one established by Thomas Helwys in Spitalfields (London) in 1612. This group is termed the General Baptists to distinguish them from the Particular Baptists who emerged during the 1630's and published their London Confession in 1644. This distinction remained in force until the older General Baptists were supplanted by the evangelicals of the "New Connexion" towards the end of the 18th century. Thereafter, the Particular Baptists, led by Andrew Fuller, formed a new and vibrant nucleus which subsequently saw the establishment of the Baptist Union in 1863.

The English Baptists maintained the Anabaptist stress on evangelism despite intermittent persecution. The office of "messenger" was specially created to facilitate evangelism in those areas where the Baptists were not yet active.[6] The Baptists were, however, regarded with extreme suspicion by the authorities, who viewed all "Anabaptist" activities as a threat to the security of Church and State. In addition to their proselytising efforts, two doctrines in particular brought disfavour upon them : the separation of

---

5. See L Stone, The Causes of the English Revolution 1529-1642 (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972) for a discussion of the nature and causes of this revolution.

6. White, op cit, pp 32-41.

the Church and the State and their belief in the liberty of conscience - both of which were closely identified with believers' baptism.

These beliefs caused them to be sharply distinguished from the magisterial Reformers, Puritans and Separatists. The Puritans, who later became the Presbyterians, followed the Constantinian model of their magisterial forefathers, believing that the government and the Church must together maintain and insist upon "true" religion.[7] The Separatists Independents agreed with the Anabaptist notion of a separate, holy church, but they continued to practise the infant baptism advocated by their spiritual teachers, especially Calvin.[8] In contrast to both these groups, the English Baptists risked life and limb in their determination to uphold both the doctrine of a visible, gathered church (Corpus Christi), and the practice of believers' baptism. The Baptists, in determinedly objecting to a national church, did not accord to the State the authority to suppress or destroy "false" religious beliefs.[9] They were not prepared to render absolute obedience to the State and, in order to preserve their liberty of conscience, the majority of their ministers consistently refused the stipends paid by the State.[10] Their rejection of infant baptism was, in reality, a shattering of the Constantinian unity of Church and State, and it involved a radically new understanding of society. This caused their opponents, both before and after the Civil War, to regard them as politically dangerous.[11]

---

7. Cf James E Tull, Shapers of Baptist Thought (Macon : Mercer University Press, 1984) pp 11ff and Timothy George, "Between Pacifism and Coercion : The English Baptist Doctrine of Religious Toleration" MQR 1:58 (1984) 30-49.

8. In 17th century England, Church and State or religion and politics were inextricably linked. Thus, groups such as the Presbytarians and the Independents (later the Congregationalists) were both political groups in Parliament and nacent denominations, cf C Hill, Religion and Politics in 17th Century England (Brighton : Harvester Press, 1986) pp 3-18, 321-342.

9. White, op cit, p 63.

10. Cook, op cit, pp 186-188 and White, ibid, p 37. Cf Hill, Religion and Politics in 17th Century England, pp 7 and 311-313 for a discussion of tithes and state stipends.

11. Cook, ibid, pp 17, 32ff, 199-201; G Hugh Wamble, "Baptist Contributions to Separation between Church and State" Bapt H & H, p 5 and White, ibid, 30-31.

A further example of English Baptist socio-religious radicalism was its support for the unpopular doctrine of the liberty of conscience. In a booklet entitled The Mystery of Iniquity (1612), Thomas Helwys addressed King James as follows :

> Heare O king, and despise not the counsell of the poore ... the king is a mortall man, and not God, therefore hath no power over the immortal soules of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them and to set spiritual Lords over them.(12)

Helwys also repeatd the Anabaptist cry, "Let them be heretics, Turks, Jews, or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them." For his pains Helwys was thrown into prison, forbidden to receive visitors and his property was confiscated. Immediately prior to the Civil War, John Barber published A Petition to the King's most excellent majesty (1641) in which he reiterated the Baptist call for religious liberty and opposed the payment of tithes to the established Anglican Church.(13)

In the years that followed, Baptists maintained these socially and religiously radical teachings : believers' baptism; the liberty of conscience; and the right of a citizen to be free of persecution from either Church or State.(14)

2. The English Baptists and the Civil War (1642-1660).

A further example of English Baptist social radicalism was its attitude to rulers, the magistrates and war. Helwys was in agreement with Smyth's view that the authority of the magistrates needed to be restricted. In 1612, Smyth had limited the power of a magistrate in respect of matters of religion and conscience :

> The magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion or doctrine [because] Christ only is the King and lawgiver of the Church and Conscience.(15)

---

12. Quoted by D F Durnbaugh, The Believer's Church (Scottdale : Herald, 1968) p 97 and George, "Between Pacifism and Coercion : The English Baptist Doctrine of Religious Toleration" MQR 1:58 (1984) p 40.

13. White, op cit, p 34.

14. Such views are to be found in the tracts issued by Leonard Busher and John Murton, cf George, ibid, p 40.

15. Quoted by W B Selbie, Non-Conformity : Its Origins and its Progress (London : Williams and Norgate, nd) p 54. See also George, op cit, pp 33 ff.

This limitation of the magistrate's authority over religious affairs was common to all the English Baptists. However, regarding war and the possibility of a Christian being a magistrate, there was, from the outset, a radical difference between the views of Smyth and Helwys.

Smyth, true to his later Mennonite convictions, held to the Schleitheim rejection of the magistracy.[16] In contrast, Helwys and the Baptist churches in England, (perhaps influenced by the Waterlanders' greater openness to Christian participation in civil government) regarded the offices of civil government and the magistracy as open to Christians. Like the magisterial Reformers and the Separatists, they were also prepared to swear civil oaths and fight in a "just" war.[17] These views probably contributed to the fact no formal association developed between the Dutch Mennonites and the English Baptists, although friendly contact was maintained for many years.

During the Civil War, Baptists not only took up arms but were also very influential in the rebels' New Model army.[18] These Baptists helped to win the war against Charles I's cavaliers and agreed to the execution of the King in 1649 - an unmistakable rejection of the social and religious order.[19] It was also the army's opposition to the proposal that Cromwell be proclaimed king that prevented it from taking place.[20] Under the Protectorate, the Baptists deposed the intolerant Presbyterians and enjoyed a significant amount of religious liberty.

It would be erroneous simply to attribute this participation in the Civil War to the Baptists' lack of sympathy for certain Anabaptist views on non-resistance. The Swiss and Dutch Anabaptist theological rejection of war cannot be isolated from their social circumstances. The Schleitheim Confession came after the virtual annihilation of the Peasants during the 1524-1525 Revolt, and Menno's pacifism was born out of the Münster debâcle. The English Baptists faced very different socio-political and economic

---

16. Cf George, ibid, pp 35-36.

17. Cf White, op cit, p 27 ff. Whitley discusses these points in his book A History of British Baptists (London : Kingsgate, 1932) pp 45-58.

18. Whitley, ibid, 61-62, and 73-81, Vedder, A Short History of the Baptists, p 219 and Heather M Vose, "Attitudes to War and Peace reflected by some Puritan-Separatist spiritual descendants - the Baptists" MQR 64:4 (1990) p 374.

19. White, op cit, p 29-32 and 84-86.

20. Vedder, op cit, p 223.

circumstances. They were in a position to do what the continental Anabaptists never were; to win a war and, thereby, forcibly to secure their civic and religious liberties.[21]

The Baptists made the intimate connection between religious and political liberty crystal clear in the Baptist Confession of 1644 :

> ... concerning the worship of God, there is but one lawgiver ... which is Jesus Christ ... So it is the magistrate's duty to tender the liberty of men's consciences (Eccl 8:8) which is the dearest thing to all conscientious men, ... and to protect all under them from all wrong, injury, oppression, and molestation...[22]

Nor were the economic implications of social change ignored. A certain Peter Chamberlen, relates Ernest Payne,

> ... was baptised in 1648 and the following year advocated the confiscation of the lands of the Crown, the Church and the Royalists, together with common and waste lands, to form a Public Bank for the benefit of the poor.[23]

During the Civil War, the Baptist struggle for liberty continued because the Presbyterians tried to limit the influence of the Baptists in the Army and, in c1645, they abolished the Anglican episcopal structure, enforcing a structure of their own. In 1648, just prior to the ousting of the Long Parliament, the Presbyterians revealed the extent of their intolerance (and its social implications) by legislating the death penalty for certain doctrinal errors and indefinite imprisonment for others.[24] The Presbyterian "rule" up to 1660 evidenced such a striking intolerance that John Milton was moved to comment that the "New Presbyter is but the old Priest writ large".[25]

To resist the system of State-appointed ministers and the use of compulsory tithes to pay ministers (as the Baptists did in the 1640's) was to resist the entire religio-social fabric of 17th century life. "A social revolution" says Christopher Hill, "was involved in this apparently simple

---

21. Cf Whitley, op cit, pp 73-81.

22. Quoted by Vedder, op cit, p 212.

23. Payne, The Story of the Baptists (London : Baptist Union, c1978) p 4.

24. Vedder, op cit, p 217.

25. In the Netherlands the Mennonites were saved from persecution because the Dutch rulers practiced a policy of religious tolerance in order to promote trade and, thereby, survive in the struggle against Spain.

point of conscience."[26] Further, the idea of religious tolerance was anathema to the conservative rulers of England because they feared that the "lower orders" would no longer be controlled by clergy loyal to the Crown.[27] The fears of the authorities appeared to be justified when, in 1656, the Baptists rejected the tithe and the payment of stipends to ministers by the State, because they felt that the members of the Church, and not the State, should support the various ministers and messengers. Even more important, their opposition to State support for the Church's ministers was based on an awareness that ministers would then be bound to both the State and the parochial system.[28]

3. English Baptist links with post-Civil War social radicalism.

After the Civil War, Baptists remained linked with radical movements because the liberty of conscience for which they had fought was still denied them, and also because of their socio-economic betrayal at the hands of the middle classes.

Before he was restored to the English throne, Charles II signed the Breda Declaration of Indulgence, in which he promised to respect the religious convictions of those who "do not disturb the general peace of the kingdom".[29] This rather ambiguous promise did not bring the persecution of Baptists to an end. The Anglicans, who had been badly shaken by the preceding religious severity of the Presbyterians, now sought to introduce an intolerance of their own.

The result was a series of anti-dissenter Acts collectively entitled the Claredon Code.[30] The Corporation Act of 1661 meant that all public officers had to take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. The Act of Uniformity (1662) demanded that all ministers be ordained and profess agreement with Anglicanism's thirty-nine articles. In 1664, the Conventicle Act stated that not more than five people were permitted to assemble for

---

26. C Hill, The Century of Revolution, p 78; see also p 164 on tithes as a means of social advancement and control.

27. Hill, ibid, p 166.

28. Cf White, op cit, pp 88-92.

29. White, ibid, p 93 ff. Cf also Vedder, op cit, p 230.

30. Hill, op cit, pp 194 & 245.

worship that did not follow the Book of Common Prayer. Charles II's belated attempt to declare a degree of religious indulgence for dissenters and Catholics in 1672 was opposed and later dismissed by Parliament.[31] Vedder succinctly comments :

> By these laws, those who refused, for conscience sake, to conform to the church established by law were deprived of all their religious and a great part of their civil rights.[32]

The Baptist argument that religious intolerance, and not religious tolerance, gave rise to civil disorder and strife, was not heeded.[33] The laws against dissenters prevented them from exercising any influence over public affairs. Even preaching without a licence was strictly forbidden. John Bunyan suffered grievously because he refused to stop preaching, an act of conscience which, in 17th century England, was politically seditious.[34] Baptists also continued to attend the forbidden Conventicles which were regarded as subversive by the authorities, especially as well-known radicals preached at them. Baptists were arrested if caught attending such meetings or if they refused to take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. Those arrested included prominent Baptists such as William Kiffen and Hansard Knollys. Fortunately, there were too many dissenters for the authorities to enforce the legal restrictions fully, let alone stamp out the movement.[35] Despite all these persecutions, then, Baptists continued to testify to the indivisibility of religious and political liberty.

The second major reason why Baptists remained linked to radical movements was that they suffered socio-economic betrayal.
The Civil War had not achieved an extension of the franchise or legal and land reform. A State church, tithes and religious intolerance were still enforced. The under classes did not benefit from the war, the yeomanry was disappearing and, within a century, the independent artisans were to enter upon "their long agony". The real victors were "the men of property".[36]

---

31. White, op cit, pp 101-117.

32. Vedder, op cit, p 231.

33. Cf T George, op cit, p 46 and Wamble, op cit, p 10.

34. See Hill, "John Bunyan and the English Revolution" Amer Bapt Q 7:4 (1988) pp 443-446.

35. Richard L Greaves, Enemies Under His Feet (Stanford : University Press, 1990) pp 126-127, 130 & 155-166.

36. C Hill, The Century of Revolution, pp 188, 308, 310.

Whereas it was the growing socio-economic and political aspirations of this individualistic and activist class that largely prompted the start of this bloody conflict, once victory had been attained, they were determined not to share its spoils.[37] Thus it was that under both the Independents and (after the Restoration) under the Anglicans, the poor were worse off than ever before. The capitalism of the middle classes took away the livelihood of the weavers and artisans, whilst the gentry foreclosed and forced their tenants off the land to make room for sheep.[38] Once the restraining hand of the Tudors and the Stuarts had been removed, the process accelerated.[39] The middle classes and the gentry, having achieved their ambitions, cast off the poor, whose religio-political fervour had contributed to middle class prosperity. Now Calvinism was no longer the rallying point for revolution, but the justification of the wealth of the "hard-working" rich and the destitution of the "idle" poor. In reaction, as one might expect, a series of seditious writings and a host of religio-political and economic movements arose to challenge this betrayal.

Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, properly understood, is not a quietistic religious tract, but the mature reflection of a man who had seen his religious and political dreams betrayed. In The Life and Death of Mr Badman, Bunyan vilifies the unscrupulous "man of trade" who extorts from the poor.[40] For this reason, Hill notes that both Bunyan and Milton "transmit to posterity much that was noble in defeated Puritanism".[41]

For the reasons just cited, there were many Baptists who participated in post-Civil War radicalism.[42] As a result, many Baptists (and Congregationalists) were arrested after the unsuccessful rising led by Thomas Venner. Though Venner was not himself a Baptist, and his actions were repudiated by prominent Baptist leaders such as William Kiffen, in the mind of the authorities, the Baptists remained suspect.[43] This, despite

---

37. David W Petegorsky, Left Wing Democracy in the English Civil War, (London : Victor Gollancz, 1940) pp 14-53 and 229-247.

38. Petegorsky, ibid, 37.

39. T H Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, pp 197-270.

40. Tawney, ibid, p 224.

41. Hill, op cit, p 252.

42. White, op cit, 54, 57 and Vedder, op cit, p 224.

43. White, ibid, pp 94 ff.

petitions with revealing titles such as The Humble Apology, The Second Humble Address and The Humble Representation (1660), which accepted the civil authority of the magistrates. Nevertheless, Baptists in general, and the radical residue in particular, were not content to subside into complete conformity :

> Baptists then, tended to be politically concerned ... because not only did they frequently come from the poorer class of people who could for the first time glimpse the possibility of political power and influence for themselves but also because they wished for further reforms.(44)

The radicalism of certain Baptists was reflected in their support for the Levellers, the Fifth Monarchists and the Irish rebels.

The Leveller leader, John Lillburne, managed to obtain the army's consent to the controversial Agreement of the People. This document demanded a full separation of Church and State (which implied a rejection of State-supported congregations), and a radical democracy that would reflect the freedom of the redeemed.(45) At least five Baptist leaders were linked with the Levellers.(46) The Quakers, too, were part of this search for an emotionally and socially satisfying Christian faith and for some measure of relief from the crushing poverty that was caused by rising taxes and prices, the Civil War and poor harvests.(47)

The collapse of the Levellers led some Baptists to join, or at least sympathise with, the Fifth Monarchists. This name was taken from Daniel's vision of the kingdoms and it was hoped that the Kingdom of Christ was about to be ushered in :

> Then shall the Oppressor cease and no more complaining shall be heard in the streets. Taxes should be no more. And Trade and Industry should abound... The poor should have bread, and the Army no more in Arrears. Prison doors should be open and Debtors satisfied without Arrests... then peace and safety, plenty and prosperity, should overflow the land.(48)

---

44. White, ibid, p 88.

45. Troeltsch op cit, pp 710 ff. As their name implies, they sought to "level" the distinctions between rich and poor; theirs was a vision of fundamental social restructuring, cf L Stone, op cit, pp 48-50.

46. White, op cit, pp 30-33, 38 and 55-56.

47. Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York : New American Library, 1929/1957), pp 39-53.

48. Quoted by Louise F Brown in The Political Activities of the Baptists and the Fifth Monarchy Men during the Interregnum (New York : Burt Franklin, 1911) p 13 & 25.

There were Baptists who supported the Fifth Monarchists and armed Baptists were known to attend all-night conventicles.[49] Another group, the Irish Baptists, evidenced "a spirit of great dissatisfaction and opposition against this present authority".[50] A Baptist captain by the name of Thomas Walcott was deeply involved with the Irish conspiracy of 1665-1666.[51]

Given this evidence, the question must be asked, why did Baptists support these movements? Two reasons have already been given : their anti-Constantinianism and their social marginalisation. But the above discussion raises two further questions : were the English Baptists of the 17th century generally poor and did they all support radical socio-religious movements?

In social terms, the Baptists were largely drawn from the under classes although, naturally, there were exceptions to this rule. Their leaders included a doctor (Smyth), a country gentlemen (Helwys) a furrier (Murton), a soap-boiler (Thomas Lampe) and merchants (William Kiffen and Edward Barber).[52] During the Civil War and Interregnum, Baptists were well represented at all levels in the army whilst a few held senior positions as scholars, merchants, publishers and lawyers.[53] Whitley provides the following list of the occupations of 40 General Baptist elders during the period 1659-1686 : one was a "gentleman of good estate" and the rest were yeomen, husbandmen, labourers, maltsters, thatchers, blacksmiths, woolcombers, weavers, fullers, tailors, etc. The members must have been drawn from much the same groups, if not from groups even lower down on the social scale, for not even "meeting-houses" could be afforded.[54]

Women too were influential within the Baptist and, particularly, the General Baptist, churches. During this period, the organisation of the General Baptist churches was largely democratic; even women were allowed the "liberty of prophesying". In his discussion of Smyth and Helwys' churches, as well as subsequent General Baptist churches, Champion Burrage noted that

---

49. Greaves, op cit, p 125-126 and L Brown, ibid p 27.

50. See Vedder, op cit, pp 221-226 and White, op cit, pp 79-85.

51. Greaves, op cit, pp 104-109.

52. White, op cit, pp 32 & 34 and Whitley, op cit, p 35. J M Cramp, Baptist History : Foundation of the Christian Church to the Present Day (London : Elliot Stock, 1868) argues that Kiffen was politically very cautious and conservative, p 393.

53. Louise Brown, op cit, pp 10-11.

54. Whitley, ibid, pp 116 & 153.

"women were allowed at the Lord's table" and with the men "come together to Pray, Prophecie, breake bread, and administer in all the holy ordinances". Women were active as deacons and the "preaching of women" comments Louise Brown "gave rise to much talk and no little ridicule".(55) Although the Quakers went further in this regard than any other sectarian group, the Baptists also gave women the opportunity to witness and minister more widely than the majority of Separatists or Anglicans.(56)

Thus, 17th century Baptists were certainly not drawn mainly from the ruling classes. In the context of the 17th century, however, the term "the poor" is easily misunderstood. Even the Levellers excluded paupers and wage labourers from their definition of the "free people" for whom they were fighting. This means that over half the population (and all the women), says Hill, were not included in the common meaning of the term "the people".(57) Given this qualification, it remains true that the majority of English Baptists were drawn from a diverse group that ranged from the under classes to the lower middle classes.

In conclusion, then, there were significant numbers of Baptists that were either actively involved in, or indirectly linked to, radical 17th century protest, though the English Baptists never fully supported these movements. Whilst many Baptists were associated with these radical movements, other Baptists followed the lead of the wealthy Kiffen, who wrote to the Irish Baptists urging moderation. He also later denied that the Baptists in any way supported the Fifth Monarchists.(58) But, even though from a 20th century perspective it is possible to argue that some Baptists remained uncommitted to social radicalism, from the perspective of their 17th century compatriots, the Baptists were perceived to be a dangerous and subversive group. This alone should cause modern South African Baptists to ask why, given their radical heritage, local Baptists preach such a tame, conservative and diluted Gospel.

17th century radicalism was defeated because of the fierce resistance of officers of the Crown and Parliament and because the radicals were

---

55. Champion Burrage, The Early English Dissenters, pp 241 & 253 and L Brown, op cit, p 5.

56. See Richard L Greaves, Triumph over Silence, pp 75-123 and (eds) R Ruether and E McLaughlin, Women of Spirit (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979) pp 20 & 151-181.

57. Hill, op cit, p 176.

58. Vedder, op cit, pp 224 ff and White, op cit, pp 100-101, 129 and 133.

themselves divided and had no clear, coherent view of either their goals or methods.[59] As a result of this failure to effect radical and lasting change, the dissenters themselves entered a period of pacifism and quietism. They turned their aspirations "to seek a Paradise within" and, consequently, nonconformist congregations became "narrow, sectarian and respectable."[60] As with the Lollards and Anabaptists before them, and the Levellers and Fifth Monarchists after them, persecution decimated Baptist ranks until they no longer sought to challenge the status quo, but only desired to survive. This legacy was carried into the 18th century.

B. THE INSULARITY OF 18TH CENTURY ENGLISH BAPTIST EXPERIENCE (1690-1769).

This period of English Baptist history was very different to the period that preceded it. After the turmoil of the 17th century, England experienced a period of reaction in which radicalism was rejected and conservatism prized. Between 1690 and 1770, Baptists experienced both religious decline and social exclusion.

Immediately prior to the Evangelical revival (c 1740ff), English society was in many ways both morally and religiously bankrupt. Moral corruption, both at court and amongst the common people, was widespread, and profane swearing, especially amongst the "upper" classes, was rife. The clergy of the established church were no exception and, according to Vedder, the "drunken, lecherous, swearing, gaming parson is a familiar character..."[61] Criminal law was incredibly severe : in 1765 over 200 offenses were punishable by death.[62] Education for the general populace was unknown, and even the few that did gain access to the universities received a very inferior education. The majority of the population were excluded from the franchise because they were "either female, or too poor to pass the means test" (for which one had to be a freehold tenant farmer who

---

59. Greaves, Enemies Under His Feet, pp 1-2, 244-250.

60. Hill, op cit, p 250, 253, 297.

61. Vedder, op cit, p 242.

62. (ed) J Clifford, The English Baptists (London : Marlborough, 1881) p 102.

earned the minimum of forty shillings annually).[63] The breakup of the feudal system had resulted in peasants being compelled to leave the land for the cities where they were increasingly exploited in the factories and mills of the urban areas.[64] The industrial revolution, though it created wealth for some, resulted in social dislocation, child labour, unemployment, harsh working conditions, urban squalor, and poverty for the vast majority. Little wonder that the slogan commonly suspended over gin shops, "Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence", seemed attractive to many.

The religious scene, in general, was typified by agnosticism. As a result of Deism, "Christianity was but half believed and less than half practised."[65] Naturally enough, the Baptists were part of this morass of spiritual deterioration. Amongst the General Baptists, the picture was one of declining attendance, disunity, doctrinal squabbles, inadequate ministers and the loss of members to Unitarianism.[66] The Particular Baptists fared little better in the face of rationalism and an inflexible and doctrinaire Calvinism which captivated the denomination.[67] Topics most often debated were whether or not the congregation should sing hymns, marry those who were not Baptists, and practise open or closed communion. In short, Baptists were preoccupied with internal ecclesiastical affairs, many of which were a legacy of the European theological disputes of the 16th and 17th centuries.

The decline of Baptist participation in socio-political affairs cannot be separated from their ongoing experience of persecution during the previous century. Persecution followed by exclusion had led to a dearth of leadership and vision. Enormous effort had to be expended by those who remained to unite and strengthen the small, beleaguered congregations. In addition, the rationalism, sterility and censoriousness of the age all took their toll, and

---

63. See P Grassow "John Wesley and Revolution" (University of Cape Town : MA Thesis, 1989) p 18.

64. See Aubin de Gruchy, "Beyond Intention : John Wesley's intentional and unintentional socio-economic influences on 18th century England" JTSA 68 (Sept 1989) p 75.

65. Vedder, op cit, p 241.

66. R Brown, The English Baptists of the 18th Century (London : Baptist Historical Society, 1986) pp 14-32, 56-66.

67. R Brown, ibid, p 5 and Hudson-Reed, Together, p 9.

it was only towards the end of the 18th century that the denomination recovered its earlier vigour.[68]

What, then, were the principle features of the 18th century Baptist religious experience and witness?

Firstly, the Baptists were characterised by their social insularity. As nonconformists, the Baptists had long been denied the advantages of state-sponsored education and access to the public life of the nation. Consequently, they had no practical knowledge of political processes and little interest in social matters. Though concerned about the immorality of their age, the Baptists defined morality largely in terms of blasphemy, card-playing, swearing and cursing, perjury, dancing, drunkenness and the profanation of the Lord's Day.[69] Indeed, for at least the first half of the 18th century,

> most General Baptists were rigidly insular, reluctant to identify with other denominations whatever the issue, whilst Particular Baptists, preoccupied with doctrinal controversy, were frequently neglectful of contemporary moral and social issues.[70]

Secondly, Baptists exhibited a large measure of conservatism. Repeatedly the English Baptists officially repudiated the charge that they were Anabaptists. The fatal move from sect to church, and from persecution to conformity, was beginning to occur. Whereas the earlier Baptists had been uncompromising about their religious and social ideals, the Baptists of the latter part of the 17th century and the greater part of the 18th century appear to have been less bold and extreme. Increasingly, it was the Quakers, rather than the Baptists, who "continued to represent the social idealism of the churches of the disinherited" but, in the end, even the Quakers did not become a "church of the poor" because of the crushing effect of ongoing persecution.[71]

Thirdly, the English Baptists were primarily concerned with their own internal problems and attempts at consolidation. As nonconformists, they were prevented from making a vibrant and meaningful contribution to the social affairs of the nation. In defence, the Baptists withdrew from socio-

---

68. Whitley, op cit, pp 195-217. Alan D Gilbert discusses the decline of 18th C dissent in Religion and Society in Industrial England (London : Longman, 1976) pp 14-17, 32-36.

69. Cf Brown, op cit, pp 6, 64, 101.

70. Brown, ibid, p 7.

71. Niebuhr, op cit, p 53.

political affairs and sought to build up both their local congregations and the organisational unity of the denomination. Despite these efforts, the Baptists experienced virtually no growth between 1689-1740.[72] This ecclesiastical insularity, and its attendant privatised view of religion, was aggravated by the fact that most Baptists lived in the rural areas where distance, the weather, poor roads, and a lack of money made travel very difficult. The years of persecution caused many Baptists to withdraw into a "defensive isolation" which was reflected in their common insistence on endogamy (marriage inside the denomination).[73] Consequently, new ideas and leaders were few and far between.

This social and ecclesiastical insularity, as is shown below, was to some extent broken down by the Evangelical revival, but change occurred very slowly at the level of the local congregations, the group from which the 1820 settlers was largely drawn. As a consequence, many of the disputes which featured in 19th century Baptist churches reflected 18th century Baptist experience more than 19th century Baptist theology and church life.

C. THE ENGLISH BAPTIST REVIVAL (1770-1820).

This section examines the English Baptist tradition between 1770 (the establishment of the New Connexion of General Baptists) and 1820 (the year the British settlers departed for South Africa). The most important feature of this period is the effect that the Evangelical revival had on Baptists in England. This period is also important in that certain of its principal features were carried over into what became the 19th century South African Baptist theological heritage.

1. The effect of the Evangelical Revival on English Baptists.

The Evangelical revival (noticeable from 1740 onwards) was not a unified or monolithic movement. Revival encompassed a wide range of matters including the renewal of personal faith and communal worship (so clearly reflected in the new hymns), church growth, and a range of social concerns.

Initially, there was a great deal of resistance to the Methodists by Baptists. The probable reasons for this were that: the Baptists were already

---

72. Vedder, op cit, p 237.

73. R Brown, op cit, p 19.

an established group with their own theology and roots in 17th century dissent; the two groups disagreed concerning infant baptism; and there was resistance amongst the "High" Calvinists towards Wesleyan Arminianism and evangelistic zeal.[74] In addition, says A C Underwood, "Wesley had the unfortunate habit of referring to the Baptists as Anabaptists".[75]

Nevertheless, a measure of revival took place as a result of the efforts of Dan Taylor (1738-1816), who established the New Connexion of General Baptists in 1770.[76] By 1817, the New Connexion comprised 70 churches with a total of 6,846 members, whilst the old General Baptists had become Unitarians and slowly disappeared from Baptist history.[77] The charismatic leadership of Taylor also strengthened ties between the New Connexion and the moderate Calvinists among the Particular Baptists, such as Robert Hall (1764-1831) and Andrew Fuller (1754-1815). After the death of the more doctrinaire Calvinists, Gill and Brine, these moderate Calvinists gained the ascendancy. A common dedication to renewal in worship, evangelism in England and overseas mission, also brought Particular and New Connexion Baptists together. The eventual fruit of these links was the joint establishment of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1891.[78] Revival was further promoted amongst the Particular Baptists by William Carey (1761-1834) and the work of the regional Associations. As a result, the Particular Baptists were not only drawn into the aftermath of the Evangelical revival, but became the pioneers of the modern missionary movement.[79] The South African Baptists later eagerly adopted these emphases of evangelism, revival, and church growth.

As the Baptist churches experienced religious renewal, increasing concern was expressed about theological education. Baptists had long been excluded from the English universities (only after 1871 were the restrictions of the University Test Act reduced). This exclusion bred a degree of

---

74. Ibid, pp 76-81.

75. A C Underwood, A History of the English Baptists (London : Kingsgate, 1947) p 149.

76. R Brown, op cit, pp 68ff and 103ff and Underwood, ibid, pp 150-156.

77. Underwood, ibid, p 155-56 and R Brown, ibid pp 104-114.

78. R Brown, ibid pp 85-94, 113 & 131.

79. Cf R Hall's Helps to Zion's Travellers (1781) and Fuller's Gospel worthy of all acceptation (1785) mentioned in S Pearce Carey William Carey (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1923) pp 11, 33.

suspicion concerning academia which continued to affect the denomination, both in England and South Africa.[80] Only towards the end of the 19th century did Baptist middle class aspirations (and educational opportunity) mean that English Baptists could obtain a university education.[81] For these reasons, Baptists concentrated on the establishment of theological colleges.[82] To the influential Bristol College (founded in 1717) were added the Horton Academy (1804) and Stepney College (now Regent's Park College, Oxford) founded in 1810.[83]

In essence, the late 18th century Evangelicals (and Baptists) agreed on "high standards of piety and personal morality" and "the necessity of conversion". They made use of itinerant preachers, sunday schools, class and chapel meetings, and enthusiastic forms of worship. Especially prior to the mid-19th century, the emphasis was on expansion rather than consolidation.[84]

2. The English Baptists and Mission.

A vital feature of the late 18th century was the insistence of the moderate Calvinists on the ability and duty of the individual soul to receive the Gospel of Christ. Carey, in particular, envisaged the evangelization of the world which he expressed in his An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to use means for the Conversion of the Heathen (1792). In the same year, Carey preached his "Deathless Sermon" at the meeting of the Northampton Baptist Association, coining the phrase "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God." As a result of this sermon and the discussions that followed, the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) was formed in October 1792.[85]

---

80. R Brown, op cit, p 124 and Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Educationalist, Part 2" Bapt Q 32:2 (1987) p 75.

81. Only towards the end of the 19th century Baptists placed more emphasis on obtaining a university education Kenneth D Brown, A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales 1800-1930 (Oxford : Claredon, 1988) pp 84-85.

82. See K Brown, ibid, pp 67 & 81.

83. Their establishment was indicative of not only revival, but also of reduced persecution, and improved organisation, financial means and better leaders, see R Brown, op cit, pp 49, 124-26.

84. Gilbert, op cit, p 52-55.

85. S Pearce Carey, William Carey, p 91 ff.

In discussing the English Baptist missionary thinking and practice, at least two major trends can be discerned. On the one hand, there was a individualistic and quietistic emphasis on the salvation of souls. On the other hand, there was a more holistic and socially aware emphasis concerned with both the personal and social outworking of Christ's salvation.(86)

The quietist emphasis drew on the 18th century experience of social withdrawal and private religious faith. In addition, Evangelical Calvinists in England drew on their Separatist heritage to emphasise the importance of "an individual and personal experience of the grace of God" and on the renewed experience of personal faith as stressed by the Wesleyan revival.(87) But, because this individual faith was not consistently related to the social context of the English Baptists, this stress on the faith of the individual very easily developed into a privatised individualism. Consequently, overseas mission was seen essentially as a matter of evangelising the "pagans" who were at once bereft of the mercy of Christ and the benefits of Western civilisation. The purpose of mission was less to change evil and destructive social structures than to seek out and save the lost. Mission, then, was privatised and centred on the attempt to save individual souls from eternal damnation.

The other trend discernible between 1770-1820 was that which drew on both the radicalism of 17th century dissent and the practical experience of Baptist missionaries overseas. It went beyond a concern for souls and involved the awareness of the social and material needs of persons and communities. It also included an interest, as shown below, in social issues such as slavery and civic liberties.

Arguably, it was the missionaries who were actually involved in the work of mission outside of England who developed broader perceptions of what mission involved. For example, a Baptist missionary by the name of Jacob Grigg was expelled from Sierra Leone because of his open condemnation of the slave trade. The Baptist missionaries in Jamaica, William Knibb and Thomas Burchell, were directly involved in the campaign to abolish slavery. Moreover, Carey, Marchman and Ward's efforts in India were not solely evangelistic. According to Underwood :

---

86. For a discussion of Carey and views of mission in the wake of the Enlightenment, see D Bosch, Transforming Mission : Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, pp 279-345.

87. See L G Champion "Evangelical Calvinism and the Structures of Baptist Church Life" Bapt Q (January 1980) p 200.

> They had planted stations in many parts of India and even in Java and the Moluccas. They had thrown their energies into educational work and into every movement for the amelioration of the social conditions of India.[88]

Such differences of perception resulted in serious disagreements epitomised by the "Serampore" dispute between Carey and the Baptist missionary committee in London. (This dispute involved a difference of opinion concerning the effort Carey expended on tasks other than evangelism).[89] It is also significant that Carey was compelled to operate within a Swedish controlled area because his criticisms of British behaviour and policies were not welcomed by the imperial authorities in India. As is argued below in chapters five and six, however, South African Baptist missionary efforts, because they were indistinguishable from white settler ideological commitments, were very different from the activities of these Baptist missionaries.

3. The social critiques of the English Baptists.

Between 1770-1820 and beyond, the English Baptists were inextricably linked to the socio-religious upheaval occasioned by both the Evangelical revival and the Industrial Revolution. Their nonconformity was rooted not only in the "Old Dissent" of the 17th century, but also the "New Dissent" of 18th and 19th century Evangelicalism. The religious zeal of the English Baptists cannot, therefore, be isolated from their social involvement. It is necessary, however, to make a distinction concerning the degree of Baptist social involvement. In other words, Baptists were perceived as more radical by their contemporaries than they are today by modern social analysts.

Those in power in the late 18th and early 19th centuries certainly perceived Baptists as a threat to the religious and social order, a point of view which was strengthened by Baptist sympathies with the American revolutionaries in their struggle for civic and religious liberty. Unlike Wesley who, in his loyalty to Toryism and the King, opposed the American

---

88. Underwood, op cit, p 196.

89. Including horticulture, social reform, literature and cultural renewal, cf Frederick S Downs, "Social influences on Nineteenth-Century Baptist missionaries in India" Amer Bapt Q 8:4 (1989) pp 248-249.

desire for independence from the political and economic control of England, the Baptists expressed sympathy for the colonists.(90) Indeed,

> ... as far as [these] dissenters were concerned, the American Declaration of Independence articulated the ideal of freedom and provided an incentive for renewed vigour in the pursuit of civil and religious liberty.(91)

English Baptist sympathy for the Americans' struggle against British religious, political and economic control stirred up the English authorities who feared that the separation between Church and State in Virginia would be followed in the other Colonies and even in England.(92)

Apart from their sympathy for the Americans, many Baptists interested themselves in the events of the French Revolution. In speaking about the Revolution in France, the Baptist publication, The Register, noted the "astonishing Revolution in France, and the increasing thirst among the nations after civil and religious liberty".(93) With regard to both the Americans and the French, dissenter sympathies were so conspicuous that they were accused of promoting anarchy by such prominent governmental leaders as Pitt and Burke.(94) Later, when news of atrocities in France became known in England, all dissenters' loyalties were questioned by "loyal Englishmen". Their religious enthusiasm, their desire for the amelioration of social evils and their growing popularity with the "lower" classes, were viewed as evidence of revolutionary, Jacobinist inclinations.(95) Baptists, because of their ongoing critique of the Constantinianism of the English State-Church order, were certainly viewed with suspicion.

But was this perception of Baptists as radical overthrowers of the social order valid? The precise nature of the impact of the Evangelical revival on English social life and structures has long been the subject of a complex debate. E P Thompson, in his pioneering study The Making of the English Working Classes, emphasised the socially ambiguous role played by the

---

90. Grosser, ibid, p 31. See also H Vose, op cit, p 375.

91. R Brown, op cit, p 135.

92. E R Norman, Church and Society in England : 1770-1970 (Oxford : Claredon Press, 1976) p 19.

93. R Brown, op cit, p 118.

94. Brown, ibid, pp 132ff.

95. A Ross, John Philip : (1775-1851) (Aberdeen : University Press, 1986) pp 58-59.

18th century Methodists who sought to serve the interests of both the emerging industrial bourgeoisie and the proletariat.[96] Thus Villa-Vicencio has said that Halevy's conception that Methodism (or the Evangelical revival) unleashed

> a social reformation which saved the nation from a violent revolution - must therefore be accepted with extreme caution ... Methodism's social influence was essentially one that favoured the bourgeoisie, inhibiting the revolution which radical workers sought.[97]

In recent years Thompson's view has been somewhat modified but his critique of Halvey's thesis still stands.[98] But this does not mean that, for the 18th and 19th century Evangelicals, revival was restricted to narrowly religious or inner spiritual experiences. For many, a Christianity that did not include social concern and reform was not true Christianity at all. Thus, they ministered to the poor, sick, imprisoned, mad and homeless. In addition to the support of many Evangelicals for the anti-slavery campaign, individuals such as Philip Doddridge, Countess Huntingdon, Hannah More, Zachary Macaulay and William Wilberforce engaged in prison and labour reform and the establishment of hospitals and schools for the poorer classes; and they founded homes for orphans, unmarried mothers and prostitutes.[99] Many Baptists readily participated in the numerous philanthropic societies established in the years following 1770 for the amelioration of the lot of the poor and sick, the establishment of homes for orphans, the prevention of cruelty towards animals, etc.[100]

Nevertheless it is true that, together with other Evangelicals, there were those Baptists who were not socially critical, still less involved in social activism. For example, with regard to slavery :

---

96. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Classes (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1963/1968) pp 44ff, 391, 412.

97. Villa-Vicencio, "Towards a liberating Wesleyan social ethic for South Africa today" JTSA 68 (Sept 1989) p 95.

98. See Gilbert, op cit, p 87ff; (eds) Harvey J Kane & Keith McClelland, E P Thompson : Critical Perspectives (Cambridge : Polity, 1990) especially pp 1-48; and (ed) T Runyon, Sanctification and Liberation (Nashville : Abingdon, 1981) pp 83-101 and 102-115.

99. Cf (ed D L Jeffrey, A Burning and Shining Light : English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1987) pp 1-57 and Ross, op cit, pp 56-76 and 215-224.

100. Norman, op cit, pp 24-25.

> The anti-slavery movement, in Britain as well as the United States, was supported, funded and staffed primarily by evangelicals. However, there were also evangelicals who were opposed to the politics of anti-slavery and others who were indifferent to them.[101]

In fact, the anti-slavery campaign (which continued after the 1820 settlers had left for South Africa), effectively illustrates the different Baptist perspectives on social ethics during this time.

During the 18th century, British ships transported one and a half million slaves and, by 1780, a staggering £70 million had been invested in the West Indian sugar trade by British persons. At its height, 100 British ships (into which about 30,000 slaves were literally packed) sailed from Liverpool in a single year in search of slaves.[102]

What was the reaction of Baptists to this evil and inhuman traffic? In 1787, the (New Connexion) Assembly said that this trade in human life was "... inconsistent with every rational and humane principle" and a committee was formed to support the cause of abolition. Thomas Langdon in 1791, spoke of Christians who supported the slave trade as :

> "... those professors of religion who stand forth as the defenders and patrons of the most horrid and diabolical practice that ever disgraced the conduct of mankind."[103]

In 1792, during the Nottingham Assembly of the Particular Baptists, when Carey preached his famous sermon on overseas evangelism, two other key issues were on the agenda : evangelism in England and the abolition of the slave trade.[104] This evidence shows that large numbers of Baptists were neither silent nor passive bystanders; their belief in the innate humanity of the slaves and the blatant injustice of this trade in "black gold" prompted them to oppose slavery. Here was no pietistic withdrawal from social and economic realities.

It is also significant that the resistance of the Baptists to slavery did not consist purely of verbal censure. Committees were formed to rouse the conscience of the English public. The missionaries, Knibb and Burchell, combined forces with Wilberforce and others and they travelled the country in an attempt to win support for their cause. This was a 19th century

---

101. Ross, op cit, p 34.

102. R Brown, op cit, p 102.

103. Underwood, op cit, p 176.

104. R Brown, op cit, p 121.

version of conscientization, and it was directed not only towards members of parliament, but also towards that fickle creature, the British public.[105] Baptist remonstrations concerning the slave trade earned them the intense dislike of the merchants of Liverpool, Bristol and London, the primary benefactors of this trade.[106] Eventually, however, success was attained: in 1807 the slave trade (in British ships) was stopped and, in 1834, slavery was abolished in the British Empire.[107]

The question that must be answered, however, is why did the Baptists participate in this campaign? Initially, some Baptists did not support resistance to slavery, and ineffectual attempts were made to dissuade Knibb from his course.[108] This reaction reflected the views of those who emphasised a privatised spirituality and a social policy of "non-involvement". How, then, did Knibb persuade Baptists to lend their support to his efforts? One reason was that he had personal experience of the brutality of slavery in Jamaica, and had himself suffered at the hands of the supporters of slavery. As a Baptist with overseas missionary experience, he could both shame Baptists into support for abolition and rouse their compassion by recounting his experiences.

A second reason was that Baptists were not generally part of the prosperous class which was benefiting from slavery. At this stage Baptists were still drawn largely from occupations such as shopkeepers, artisans (skilled and semi-skilled craftsmen and women) and farmers. Only 5.4% were from the richer class of merchants or manufacturers and only 6% were drawn from the poorer miners, colliers and labourers.[109] Only from mid-19th century onwards did this begin to change in any significant way.[110] Arguably these Baptists, as the descendants of the victims of persecution,

---

105. Underwood, op cit, p 199.

106. R Brown, op cit, p 122.

107. In South Africa slavery was abolished in 1836. For a discussion of slavery in South Africa, see R L Watson, The Slave Question : Liberty and Property in South Africa (London : Wesleyan University Press & University Press of New England, 1990).

108. J Clifford, The English Baptists, p 156.

109. Gilbert, op cit, pp 62-65 and K Brown, op cit, pp 29 & 33.

110. Thompson, ibid, pp 30 and 34; Cuthbertson, "The Nonconformist Conscience and the South African War, 1899-1902" (UNISA : PhD, 1986), pp 16 and 97.

could also identify with the suffering of the slaves at the hands of privileged rulers.

A third reason for Baptist involvement in the anti-slavery campaigns was that this did not involve a radical critique of the structures of British life or policy. Knibb and others were not asking of Baptists a rejection of the idea of Empire, but only that the rights of British subjects should be extended to all in the British dominions. This is an argument that was also used by the LMS (London Missionary Society) missionary John Philip, in relation to the Khoikhoi and Xhosa of the Eastern Cape.(111)

Finally, the Baptists, along with other nonconformists, were able to use the issue of slavery to oppose establishment policy in England and resist Anglican proselytisation in the British colonies. The matter of slavery, then, along with the other social critiques of Evangelicals, cannot be separated from the struggle between the establishment and the nonconformist movement that intensified after 1850. As is argued directly below, the fact that Baptist social involvement increased apace only after 1820 means that the South African Baptist settlers carried with them the less overtly political legacy of the 18th century and early 19th century.

D. ENGLISH BAPTIST DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN 1820-1899.

Although the Baptist setters had already left for South Africa by 1820, it is important to note the emphases of this period. For, it can be shown that English Baptist social involvement increased during this period and that the theologies of Spurgeon and, especially, of Clifford, extend far wider than the circumscribed interpretations of South African Baptists.

1. The social involvement of 19th century English Baptists.

The census of 1851 revealed that in the new cities thousands of people attended nonconformist churches. But, it also revealed that thousands more of the working class exhibited no interest in religion at all.(112) These revelations resulted in a drive by nonconformists to reach these "unchurched masses" and to extend their influence throughout all sectors of English life.

---

111. See B Stanley, "Nineteenth century Liberation Theology : Nonconformist Missionaries and Imperialism" Bapt Q 32:1 (1987) pp 5-18. He points out also that Marchman and Carey were in favour of British rule in India.

112. Gilbert, op cit, p 113.

Along with other nonconformists, Baptists participated in the campaign against the Test and Corporation Acts (which were finally abolished in 1828). Amongst these "dissenters" were leading Baptists such as Hall, Knibb and Carey, who did not separate the need for religious liberty from that of civic liberty. Hall, for example, went on to demand the freedom of the press, "issued an appeal on behalf of the fund raised by the distressed frame-work knitters of the town [Leicester] and asserted the right of all wage-earners to combine in defence of their interests."(113) After the 1850's Baptists became even more involved in social issues. No doubt the franchise Reform Bills of 1832, 1867 and 1884, which gave increasing numbers of male Baptists the vote, partly contributed to increased social interest. Certain key leaders in the Baptist Union led the way into greater contact with "the world" and Baptists began to take pride in popular and respected Baptists such as Spurgeon, Clifford and Sir Henry Havelock.(114)

The social concern of Baptists should not, however, be over-emphasised. During the 19th century, the main appeal of nonconformity was to the increasingly prosperous middle classes. As a result,

> Annual Congregational and Baptist Assemblies attacked slavery, advocated disestablishment, free trade, extension of the franchise and the political rights of the individual 'but showed little or no interest in legislation to improve working class conditions'.(115)

This meant that Baptists were not engaged in promoting radical social renewal in England nor were they critical of the notion of a British Empire. Evangelicalism further included a quietistic element which, though recognising the evils of society, did not regard it as part of their task to oppose the authorities or seek to change the laws or institutions of their day. There were many Baptists who largely ignored the broader social issues and threw their energies into home and foreign mission which, essentially, meant promoting evangelism in England and abroad.

This group continued to see themselves as a separate, morally superior and "peculiar" people. When Rev Samuel Green (President of the Union in 1885) spoke of the need for Baptists to "be concerned with everything -

---

113. Underwood, op cit, p 170.

114. A M P LeBarbour "Victorian Baptists : A Study of Denomi-national Development" (University of Maryland : PhD, 1977) pp 9-15.

115. Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Educationalist, Part 1 - General Educational Concerns" Bapt Q 31:8 (1986) p 394.

social matters, domestic and international politics - that belonged to the welfare of mankind", some did not welcome his teachings.[116] But, by the 1850's, the view that Baptists should not be "contaminated by public questions" was held only by a minority.[117] Some amongst the rank and file membership criticised those ministers and members who were involved in political affairs and their viewpoint was summed up by George Freeman :

> "The ministry that departs from the great mission of saving sinners and making souls is a discredit in the world and a degradation to itself."[118]

Even more damaging to the eventual impact of the nonconformist movement was the rise of moralism. By moralism is meant the view that the churches (and the nonconformist conscience in particular) could impose their moral precepts on the British people. The unfortunate result of this was that campaigns against alcohol and Sabbath entertainment, for example, were regarded as far more important than much needed structural changes and socio-economic justice.[119] Eventually the moralism of the middle classes (who funded Baptist projects and ministers' salaries) won the day, and drove away working class members. Evangelism and individual moral change were perceived to be the answer to humanity's ills, even though individual charity was a completely inadequate answer to the needs of a rapidly changing society. But because the Baptists (and other nonconformists) were unable to grasp this, they entered the 20th century largely unprepared to resist the forces of secularization and privatization. Clifford was one of the few Baptists that maintained support amongst the working classes precisely because of his deeper, structural understanding of the burning issues of education, poverty, labour, power and religion.[120]

2. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892).

The South African Baptists have exhibited great respect for Spurgeon in their writings. It would seem, however, that they have distorted, or at least diluted, his theology.

---

116. LeBarbour, op cit, p 227.

117. LeBarbour, ibid, pp 233 & 241-242. For a discussion of the social involvement of Baptists, see K Brown, op cit, pp 208-220.

118. Quoted by K Brown, ibid, p 212.

119. LeBarbour, op cit, p 256 ff.

120. Ibid, pp 264-270.

Spurgeon was pre-eminently a puritan, pastor, preacher and evangelist. Once, at Crystal Palace, he preached to no less than 23,654 people and his church in London was always packed beyond its considerable capacity.[121] His sermons were widely published in both England and America and avidly read by many thousands elsewhere. Through his evangelism, preaching, printed sermons and other writings, Spurgeon exerted an enormous impact on his contemporaries. In addition, his establishment of the Pastor's College (1856) meant that his influence far exceeded the limits of his individual ministry. Towards the end of his life Spurgeon became involved in the Downgrade Controversy. This controversy (1887-1888) centered on Spurgeon's accusation that too many in the Baptist Union were neglecting Calvinism and being influenced by "rationalistic theology and the assumptions of biblical criticism".[122] But even this extended altercation did not detract from his considerable contribution to the Baptist cause.

Spurgeon's theology and his College were very important in terms of their subsequent impact on the South African Baptists. Not only did South African Baptist leaders correspond with Spurgeon, but his College also supplied a number of pastors for the South African churches.

A brief examination of the aims and curriculum of Spurgeon's College indicates the type of education received by ministers who went to South Africa during the crucial years of the 19th century. According to an analysis by Nicholls, the curriculum included Biblical Studies; Greek, Hebrew and Latin; French; English grammar and writing; doctrine and church history; the basics of sciences such as zoology and chemistry; moral science and metaphysics; poetry and oratory; and, finally, church work.[123] It is significant that the curriculum included very little on social issues other than education, missionary work, total abstinence and the letting of property.[124] Even though Nicholls' article includes lengthy descriptions of sermons and discussions that Spurgeon conducted for the students, there is no mention of current social issues. The primary aim of the College was

---

121. Underwood, op cit, p 218.

122. M Nicholls, "The Downgrade Controversy : A neglected Protagonist" Bapt Q 32:6 (1988) p 260. See also Mark T E Hopkins, "Spurgeon's opponents in the Downgrade Controversy" Bapt Q 32:6 (1988) 274-294.

123. Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Educationalist, Part 1 - General Educational Concerns" Bapt Q 31:8 (1986) p 388 and Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Educationalist, Part 2, Bapt Q 32:2 (1987) p 81.

124. Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Educationalist, Part 2", pp 82ff.

to produce "gospel preachers"[125] and, in 1870, Spurgeon provided this description of effective ministers :

> (i) plain speech and sound doctrine (ii) common sense and humble in the estimate of their intelligence (iii) popular sympathy (iv) men whose one object is to save souls (v) men of varying intellectual ability... (vi) self-sacrifice and dogged determination.[126]

Central to an analysis of the impact of Spurgeon's College is the question of what is meant by "the gospel" and a "Pastor's College". Spurgeon's emphasis on the salvation of the individual, together with the later neglect of Spurgeon's social concerns, meant that aim of producing "gospel preachers" had as its end result preachers who would concentrate their efforts on personal spiritual ends. As shown in chapters six and seven below, this Euro-centric, spiritualised and privatised conception of theological education is still a dominant feature of South African Baptist churches and theological colleges.

What is much less often emphasised is that, in addition to his preaching, evangelism, and involvement in the Pastor's College, Spurgeon was also committed to many philanthropic and educational projects.

During the Victorian era, argues David Duke, there were three approaches to social concern : individual charity; reform; and calls for structural, socio-economic change. Essentially, Spurgeon adopted the first of these.[127] What is striking, however, is the degree and extent of his social concern. It included supporting the work of a range of missions and societies, schools for the poor, and orphanages. Spurgeon also supported demands for state-sponsored education and the extension of the franchise, and he was critical of war and aspects of imperialism. These were based on Spurgeon's devotion to God, his desire to see people saved and his stress on Christian character. Thus, he did not espouse a dualism between the secular and religious realms, and he insisted that church buildings be used throughout the week for social ministries. He spoke out against practices which dehumanised those for whom Christ had died and, concerning the franchise, stated that : "it is part of my religion to desire justice and

---

125. Nicholls, Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Educationalist, Part 1 -General Educational Concerns", pp 391ff.

126. Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Educationalist, Part 2" p 78.

127. David N Duke, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon : Social Concern exceeding an Individualistic, Self-Help Ideology" Bapt H & H 22:4 (1987) p 47.

freedom for all."[128] Spurgeon was also a spokesperson for political dissent and he supported Gladstone's political liberalism.[129]

It should not be forgotten, however, that Spurgeon stressed the personal life of the individual. His understanding of salvation remained centered on the individual person and this privatised religious ethic resulted in an individualistic rather than structural approach to social questions.[130] For this reason, as Underwood remarks, "it is doubtful whether it ever occurred to him that a fundamental change in the social structure was needed."[131] However, whilst Spurgeon did not develop structural analyses of what caused social ills, he was extremely conscious of them and spent virtually all of his considerable earnings in helping those in need.[132] How lamentable it is that the South African Baptists have not actually followed the example of the English Baptist leader whom they so greatly admire.

3. John Clifford (1836-1923).

Clifford's approach is important because, of all the 19th century English Baptists, he came closest to a radical critique of the social structures of Victorian England.

Clifford was the son of a factory worker and was himself a worker by the age of 12. This background was essential to his later theology because it inculcated in him a consciousness of the poor and powerless. Consequently, his theology was not a comfortable, self-satisfied, middle class theology. By the age of 19 he was a student in a Baptist College and he later became a minister of the New Connexion church in Paddington, London. He was highly intelligent and had an insatiable appetite for learning. He developed a Christocentric theology and was committed to personal evangelism, but he did not espouse an a-social pietism. He identified with the labouring classes and was a member of the Fabian Society. Further,

---

128. Ibid, pp 47-55.

129. Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Educationalist : Part 1", p 387.

130. See Grosser, op cit, pp 44, 59 and Cuthbertson, op cit, pp 148-149.

131. Underwood, op cit, p 221.

132. William R Estep, "The Making of a Prophet : An Introduction to Charles Haddon Spurgeon" Bapt H & H 19:4 (1984) pp 11-13.

> By insisting that Christianity had to do with the whole of life, economic, civic, national and international, he was a pioneer in directing the thoughts of Free Churchmen to the social implications of Christianity.[133]

He gave expression to this theological perception by supporting the extension of the franchise, joining the unpopular protest against the South African War[134], defending the liberty of conscience and befriending conscientious objectors during the First World War.[135]

Clifford was also closely involved in the education controversy and he upheld the principle of "free, unsectarian and compulsory education for all."[136] Education, in his view (and in the views of increasing numbers of Baptists from 1860's onwards), should be paid for by the State, should not be offered within the framework of Anglican (or any other) system of doctrine, and should be available even to the poorest of the poor.[137]

Clifford's social awareness also extended to the economic ills of his time. He was sympathetic with the plight of the dockworkers and the striking Bethesda quarrymen (in Wales) and, in 1894, he became the President of the nonconformist Christian Socialist League. Clifford was also well aware of the influence of class on people's thinking and spoke of the need for Liberalism to advance the cause of the "lower" social stratum by shedding its wealthier and more aristocratic members.[138] He was one the few nonconformists who had a following amongst the working classes.[139] Concerning economic matters, whilst believing that indolence was anti-social and anti-Christian, he was nevertheless deeply aware of the evils of competition and he advocated a system of profit-sharing that contrasted strongly with the exploitative capitalist practices of his time.[140]

---

133. Underwood, op cit, p 228.

134. Cuthbertson, ibid, pp 30, 103ff, see also the anti-war views of Charles Aked, pp 110ff.

135. See Underwood, op cit, pp 228-230; H Vose, op cit, pp 376ff; and J Marchant, Dr John Clifford : Life, Letters and Reminiscences (London : Cassel & Co, 1924) p 145 ff.

136. J Marchant, ibid p 114 ff.

137. LeBarbour, op cit, pp 250-256.

138. D Thompson, "John Clifford's Social Gospel" Bapt Q 31:5 (1986) p 205.

139. See Cuthbertson, op cit, pp 103ff.

140. D Thompson, op cit, p 208.

Clifford was also unusual in that he spoke out in favour of the rights of women and children. Even though both 17th century Baptists and 18th century Methodists had previously been very open to the views of women and even gave positions of responsibility to them, women were increasingly excluded when these denominations sought to consolidate their positions.[141] By 1830, the Wesleyans virtually banned women preachers. Despite the views of men like Clifford, 19th century Congregationalists and Baptists admitted only a few women ministers.[142]

For Clifford, the church was not a community that could be abstracted from social realities. In 1859, he argued that the church existed not only for the spiritual improvement of its members but also to labour for the "decrease of the evils of society, and the increase of the individual and social good by the dissemination of the Gospel of Christ."[143] In Clifford's understanding there was no distinction between the "sacred" and the "secular" dimensions of life, and he succumbed neither to dualism nor spiritualization. He spoke of the need for "social missionaries" and, in contrast to the type of sermons and addresses common in South Africa during the 19th century, his presidential address to the Baptist delegates in 1872 was on the subject "Jesus Christ and modern social life".[144] In his own mind, individual salvation and social commitment were never separated. He held that it was not enough to change individuals, social conditions, too, needed to be changed. Along with leaders such as F B Meyer, Clifford

> ... encouraged his fellow Baptists to take part in a Forward Movement, linking together all the Free Churches, which did not compartmentalize evangelism and social concern, making an honest attempt to overcome the individualism of traditional evangelicalism.[145]

On the basis of the evidence provided above, it can be seen that a great many Baptists, including prominent leaders such as Spurgeon and Clifford, did not propagate a privatised version of the Christian faith

---

141. Cf Nancy A Hardesty, "The Wesleyan Movement and Women's Liberation" IN (ed) Runyon, op cit pp 164-173.

142. K Brown, op cit, p 17. He also discusses the position of women within nonconformity and their practice of "family limitation" p 178-179, 182-183.

143. D Thompson, op cit, pp 202-203 (my emphasis).

144. D Thompson, ibid, p 207.

145. J H Y Briggs, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon and the Baptist Denomination in nineteenth century Britain" Bapt Q 31:5 (1986) p 227.

during the years 1820-1899. Though they differed in terms of their emphases and actual economic or political proposals, they realised that a purely personal spirituality was a distortion of the Gospel itself. Despite their theological wisdom and prophetic leadership, however, there were still some Baptists who continued to promote a diluted version of both the Gospel and their own theological heritage.

After this examination of the socio-theological heritage of the English Baptists between 1612 and 1899, attention can now be given to the way in which South African Baptists have interpreted their English Baptist roots.

E. SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS INTERPRET THEIR ENGLISH BAPTIST ROOTS.

At the outset, it may be remarked that the periods 1690-1769 and 1770-1820 are the ones most closely reflected in the theological praxis of both the 19th and 20th century South African Baptists. Whilst this may be readily understandable with reference to the 19th century pioneers, it is entirely unsatisfactory that the more radical English Baptist theological traditions should have been so greatly neglected by 20th century South African Baptists. Hopefully, this thesis will make a contribution to the necessary process of re-reading our Baptist roots in the light of present South African challenges to our faith.

With regard to the radicalism of the 17th century, then, it is clear that very little has been said concerning this aspect of their heritage by South African Baptists. In his Master's thesis, Hudson-Reed briefly discusses Smyth and Helwys as well as the origins of both the General and Particular Baptists. However, he discusses neither the context within which these groups emerged nor their social radicalism.[146] In his thesis, Ellis André mentions the participation of Baptists in the New Model army and the Fifth Monarchy movement,[147] but he attempts no further analysis of the 17th century Baptists nor the implications of their social radicalism for modern South African Baptists. Parnell, whilst he notes the significant contribution made by Smyth and Helwys to the doctrine of the separation of

146. Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 11-12.

147. André, "The Baptist Understanding of the relationship between Church and State", p 28.

Church and State, does not spell out what this may imply for Baptists in South Africa.[148]

Perhaps the most extensive discussion of the 17th century Baptists is that of Jeffree James' article on "Baptists and Social Action". He shows that Baptists were part of the social radicalism of their time and that their hopes were dashed with the defeat of "political Puritanism" in 1660. With regard to Bunyan's writings, he suggests (contrary to Hill's view mentioned earlier) that they were possibly "an implied protest against socialising and politicising the gospel".[149] However, like the writers already mentioned, James fails to relate his information to 20th century Baptist theological praxis.

During the 19th century, led by the Baptist Sir Gordon Sprigg (and others), a determined effort ensued in the Cape parliament to "free religion from State control and the churches from State patronage". The Baptists also refused an offer of a government grant.[150] However, contrary to the English Baptists of the 17th century, South African Baptists seemingly restrict their understanding of liberty of conscience to "matters of faith". Thus, the Baptist Constitution of 1877 stated that it was an aim of the Union:

> To maintain the right of all men everywhere to freedom from legal disadvantages in matters purely religious.[151]

More recently the Union's 1987 Statement of Principles states :

> ... no individual should be coerced by the State or any secular, ecclesiastical or religious group in matters of faith.[152]

In other words, religious liberty is affirmed, but it is largely isolated from civic liberty and neither the meaning nor implications of phrases such as "purely religious", "legal disadvantage" or "matters of faith" are clearly spelt out.

What lessons could the South African Baptists have learnt from the 17th century English Baptists?

---

148. Parnell, Being a Baptist, pp 46-48.

149. James, "Baptists and Social Action" (Unpublished paper delivered at the Cape Town Baptist College) p 2.

150. See Hudson-Reed, Together, p 75.

151. Ibid, pp 50 & 68 (my emphasis).

152. SABH 1987-88 p 179, (my emphasis).

Firstly, that civic and religious liberties are indivisible. The religious and social distortions inherent in the ideology of Apartheid, for example, were indivisible and affected both the social and religious existence of millions of people. Secondly, the doctrine of the separation between the Church and the State was understood by the English Baptists, not as an excuse to withdraw into the quietism so prevalent amongst local Baptists, but as a reason to resist the economic and political abuses of the Constantinianism of the English crown. Thirdly, the fact that the New Model army was a rebel army that resisted the "lawful" and established government of England has not been sufficiently recognised. At that time, Baptists took up arms against the 17th century equivalent of the State because they believed that it was evil and unjust. Finally, given the fact that South Africa is presently experiencing a period of transition, modern Baptists need to ensure that a future dispensation does not benefit only a particular group, but brings real benefits to all those who are presently poor and marginalised.

What, then, of the 18th century heritage of decline and insularity? Quoting Wheeler Robinson, Hudson-Reed states that the first half of the 18th century was "the most stagnant and lethargic period of Baptist history."[153] In turn, Ellis André said this concerning the 18th century English Baptists :

> ...Baptists engaged in theological hair-splitting and became introverted and sterile.[154]

Many of the doctrinal disputes common during the 18th Century re-surfaced in the 19th Century churches in the Eastern Cape. One issue, which estranged not only English but also the German Baptist churches, was that of open or closed communion.[155] Another was the ongoing dispute between the Arminians and the Calvinists.[156] In Grahamstown, the disagreement between the evangelicals and Calvinists led to a "walk-out" from the Bathurst

---

153. Hudson-Reed, Together, p 9.

154. Ellis André, op cit, p 28.

155. Hudson Reed, Together, p 20 and Haus, "The German Baptist Churches" IN (ed) S Hudson-Reed, Baptists in South Africa (1975) pp 21-22.

156. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings" pp 15-16, 48-49 and 65-66.

Street Church and the formation of the Hill Street Ebenezer Baptist Church in 1851.[157]

It would seem, then, that the 1820 British settlers reflected the pietism and enforced withdrawal of 18th century English Baptist experience. Concerning these disputes Hudson-Reed says :

> Their conflicts in theological wranglings and their disputes over church order all find their roots in 18th century Baptist history in England.[158]

What is significant about these conflicts is not only that they retarded the growth of the young churches, but also that these dissensions maintained the European character of these churches. Thus, rather than concerning themselves with their unique task in South Africa, Baptist churches in South Africa were divided over the denominational disputes of a European context which they had physically, but not theologically, left behind.

The revival and missionary activity of the period 1770-1820 were very significant because they formed the experiences of Baptists in England immediately prior to the departure of the 1820 settlers. Quite predictably, the "carriers" of the English Baptist tradition, namely the settlers and their pastors, reflected the period with which they were most familiar. Furthermore, as the majority of the settlers were from the poorer and uneducated classes, they were not aware of the theological diversity of their own Baptist heritage. Thus, the 19th century Baptists in South Africa primarily emphasised internal church affairs, that is, evangelism, personal discipleship and church growth.

These concerns are closely reflected in the major primary and secondary texts produced by (white) South African Baptists. Batts and Hudson-Reed, for example, extensively chronicle the growth within individual churches and the establishment of new Baptist churches across the country. Mission is understood largely in terms of evangelism followed by "church planting" amongst black South Africans. The many publications of the Baptist Historical Society as well as the South African Baptist Handbooks, Magazines and Newspapers also clearly reflect these concerns. What is noticeable, is that other English Baptist emphases, especially broader missionary and social

---

157. The church was actually formed in 1849 but their own building only became available for use in 1851. See Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings" pp 92ff; Evans, The Romance of the Early Years (Cape Town, 1933) p 33 and One and a Half Centuries of Grahamstown Baptist Witness, pp 7-8.

158. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings" p 20.

concerns, are virtually absent. This means that the pietistic, spiritualised aspects of Evangelicalism were "selected" and perpetuated by the early South African Baptists, while the social critique exercised by some Evangelicals (including a number of Baptists) was neglected, even ignored.

As far as mission was concerned, it has been argued that during the 19th century, Baptists in South Africa were influenced by "the spirit of religious revival and spiritual pietism" and that names like Carey and Spurgeon were "watchwords".[159] Hudson-Reed has stated that Carey had begun a "new era in Protestant Missions" and that many of the English settlers "had imbibed the spirit of Carey".[160]

But, even though Carey is highly regarded in South African Baptist circles, his example of holistic mission has not been followed in Baptist missionary efforts in South Africa. This is revealed in the fact that, unlike Carey, South African Baptists stressed evangelism far more than they did any concern for the general well-being and liberty of the "natives". Furthermore, unlike Knibb and Carey, the South African Baptists were caught up in the process of the colonial dispossession of the indigenous people of South Africa. This meant that the South Africans were, inevitably, caught up in the social conflicts that pertained in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere. It is not without significance that Hudson-Reed quotes an impassioned letter from Rev William Davies of Grahamstown defending the settlers against outrageous attacks on them by Christians at home "in the parlour, in the pulpit and on the missionary platform".[161] A final important point is that there was no contact between South African Baptists and English Baptist missionaries because English Baptist missionary efforts concentrated on the West Indies, the Far East, India, West Africa and Europe and not on South Africa.[162] In addition, it had been agreed between the LMS and the BMS that the former would concentrate on South Africa. Thus, there were no Baptist missionaries working amongst the indigenous people in the Cape, though a few men were sent to serve as pastors for the settlers.

Finally, how have South African Baptists interpreted their English Baptist heritage as reflected in the internal growth and renewed social involvement of the period 1820-1899?

---

159. Jonsson IN (ed) Hudson-Reed, Together, p 35.

160. Hudson-Reed, Together, p 10.

161. Ibid, p 15.

162. J Clifford, The English Baptists, pp 142-143.

An essential aspect of the South African Baptists' perception of their English heritage is their admiration for the theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Amongst both the English and German churches, the veneration in which Spurgeon was, and still is, held further explains the agenda of the South African Baptist churches. The sermons of Spurgeon were widely read in South Africa and his son, Rev Charles Spurgeon junior, even visited South Africa in 1894.(163) Often, if there was no minister present, one of the members of the congregation would read a sermon of Spurgeon's during the church service.(164) He also recommended several pastors to South African churches, many of whom were students who had recently completed their studies at his Pastor's College.

The nature of the training received at Spurgeon's College has already been noted. The effect of this training was to further sanction the proclivity towards Europe that, even today, persists amongst South African Baptists. The syllabus of this College was, arguably, suitable for congregations in a European setting.(165) But in a South African context, such studies did not equip a pastor to deal effectively with the cultural and political complexities of the Eastern Cape border situation. Furthermore, the earlier tendency of English Baptists to stress a College (rather than a University) education, has been perpetuated in South Africa. To date, very few Baptist ministers in South Africa have been educated outside South African Baptist Colleges. Consequently, the majority of Baptist ministers (black and white) promote the privatised version of the Christian faith that they were taught.

But how has Spurgeon been interpreted? As is argued above, Spurgeon's theology was broader and more complex than has sometimes been thought. But in South Africa, the more privatised elements of his theology have been emphasised, whilst his social concern and numerous philanthropic projects have been virtually ignored. In addition, the greatly increased social involvement of English Baptists (after 1820) has not received much attention amongst South African Baptists. An exception is André's brief observations that there were English Baptists who supported the Chartists in their efforts to win universal suffrage, freer access to the House of Commons and a lower

---

163. Cf the Taylor St Jubilee, p 14 and Batts, op cit, p 125.

164. Cf Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 21-22, 109, 123 and Haus, op cit, p 17.

165. C W Parnell, G W Cross : The Man who gave his Life (SA Baptist Historical Society) p 5.

bread price.[166] He goes on to say that Baptists were evidencing a greater willingness to participate in social affairs, not only as individuals, but as a "church unit".

In contrast to Spurgeon, Clifford has received very little attention. A letter from Clifford regretting that he was unable to visit South Africa is quoted in Batts' book, but no discussion of Clifford's theology or social activism ensues.[167] Elsewhere it is noted that T B King had come under the influence of Clifford before coming out to South Africa "and caught something of his passion for social righteousness, as well as his passion for souls".[168] This is reflected, says Hudson-Reed, in his "keen sense of responsibility to the community" and "deep sympathy for the Black peoples of South Africa." It is significant that Hudson-Reed goes on to speak of King's contribution towards the establishment of the SABMS, his "keen sense of responsibility" for the "spiritual welfare" of blacks and that the prime object of all church work must be "the spiritual improvement of the individual".[169] These emphases are important in that they include Clifford's religious concerns, but they largely exclude his emphasis on the necessity for structural social inequalities to be addressed and his understanding of the social and community aspects of the Christian faith.

What can be concluded from the analyses provided in this chapter? It is clear that 17th century Baptists combined religious enthusiasm and social radicalism. They practiced believer's baptism in a very unfavourable social climate and they supported the extension of civic and religious liberties. During the Civil War, they were active within the New Model army. After the War, many Baptists supported the attempts of groups such as the Levellers and the Fifth Monarchists to bring about socio-economic and political transformation. But, rather than noting the social radicalism of the 17th century and applying these principles to the socio-economic and political inequalities of South Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, South African Baptists have emphasised the narrow ecclesiastical concerns and social insularity of the 18th and early 19th century English Baptists. Why has this

166. André, op cit, p 29.

167. History of the Baptist Church in South Africa, p 124.

168. Hudson-Reed, A Kingly Contribution (SA Baptist Historical Society) p 2.

169. Ibid, p 4.

been the case? As argued in the next chapter, the Baptist denomination in South Africa has been dominated by white, middle class groups who were content to propagate evangelism, church planting and an a-contextual form of mission. Therefore, the limited social concerns of the early 19th century and the more extensive social theology of the late 19th century, have been virtually ignored. For the same reasons, aspects of Spurgeon's theological praxis have been omitted whilst Clifford's remarkable prophetic legacy has been almost entirely disregarded.

****

CHAPTER 5

THE 19TH CENTURY CONSEQUENCES OF PRIVATIZATION : A EURO-CENTRIC THEOLOGY AND CONFORMITY TO COLONIALISM.

One consequence of the privatised theology that the settlers brought with them was that it hindered, even precluded, the development of a more self-critical and holistic theology. A second consequence was that it led to the Baptist settlers' conformity with colonialism. This compliance with the dominant ideology or "spirit of their age", in turn, detrimentally affected the paradigm with which Baptists in South Africa entered the 20th century.

This chapter is concerned with three main issues. Firstly, to analyse the context from which the 19th century Baptist settlers came. As the English Baptist roots have already been discussed in some detail, attention is given here to the German Baptist roots. The importance of the social and theological origins of the Baptist settlers lies in the fact that their privatised theology and Euro-centric approach did not enable them to resist the temptation to conform with, and benefit from, colonialism. Secondly, this conformity with colonialism meant that the Baptist witness in South Africa was, from the outset, encapsulated within the confines of white self-interest. Thirdly, this chapter shows the consequences of a Euro-centric theology and the Baptists' conformity to colonialism in terms of South African Baptist theology, congregational activities, ecclesiastical structures and mission.

A. THE ORIGINS OF THE 19TH CENTURY BAPTIST SETTLERS.

As stated in chapter one, the first Baptists arrived in South Africa along with the 1820 settlers from England. Subsequently, a small number of German Baptists arrived between 1857 and 1858. These few individuals were the pioneers of the Baptist witness in South Africa. They engaged in evangelism amongst the settlers, established churches, and created the Baptist Union and the SABMS in 1877 and 1892, respectively.

Despite the claim of Rev William Davies, pastor of the Grahamstown Baptist church, that he was "perfectly unconnected with politics", the theological consciousness of the Baptists had been nurtured within a variety

of socio-political and economic contexts within Europe.[1] Furthermore, their arrival and settlement in South Africa was fraught with profound socio-political and economic implications. Because subsequent Baptist theology, institutions, mission work and social consciousness were shaped by this period, a critical analysis of it is essential.

1. The English Roots of the 1820 Baptist settlers.

As argued in the previous chapter, the English Baptist settlers brought with them a form of Baptist witness largely derived, on the one hand, from their 18th century experience of insularity and decline and, on the other hand, from the revival and concern for mission that marked the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This meant that the Baptist tradition in this country was, from the outset, bereft of the 17th and 19th century English Baptist traditions of social critique or radicalism. Furthermore, because the settlers that came to the Eastern Cape in 1820 were drawn largely from the poorer and uneducated classes, they had little, if any, knowledge of the varied nature of their own Baptist tradition. Their restricted and privatised understanding of the Christian faith was subsequently reinforced by the fact that their pastors were largely drawn from Spurgeon's Pastors' College. More often than not, such pastors did not share Spurgeon's social concerns. Where they did, they were expressed within the bounds of the white settlements rather than being the basis of a deeper analysis of the socio-economic and political realities of the conflict-ridden Eastern frontier. The English Baptists, then, brought with them a largely privatised understanding of the Christian Gospel according to which evangelism, conversion, personal discipleship and church growth, were the central features.

The ongoing dependence of the young Baptist church in South Africa on pastors from England meant that an indigenous church, consisting of white and black South African-born members and leaders, was slow to materialise. This is contrary to Akers' claim that in South Africa:

> ... the Baptist work was forced, by its theological understanding and the political and economic situation, to be indigenous from its earliest beginnings.[2]

---

1. S Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 88.

2. Stuart Akers, "South African Baptists involved in Missions to the other than White groups in Southern Africa" (L Th thesis submitted to the Baptist Theological College, Johannesburg, 1978) p 10.

In terms of financial independence, Akers' statement is valid, but he does not discuss the meaning of the term "indigenous" or the effects of the continued theological dependence of the South African Baptists on England and Germany. Furthermore, these English pastors, for reasons of incompatibility or ill-health, often stayed only for a short time.(3) This did not encourage the development of church leaders who could make a new or creative contribution to the ministry of the South African Baptist churches.

During the 19th century, the North American Baptists had a very limited impact on the Baptists in South Africa. For example, Pastors Peter Riemer and Schwartzmann arrived from the USA in 1874 and 1895 respectively, to work amongst the German Baptists.(4) During the 1890's, missionaries from the National Baptists and the Lott Carey Mission were sponsored by black Americans and worked in various parts of what are today termed Ciskei and Transkei.(5) Only during the 20th century did American Baptists significantly influence the South African Baptists.(6) The nature and extent of this influence is discussed in chapters six and seven.

2. The nature of the Baptists' German roots and their effect on the 19th century South African Baptist tradition.

The theological vision of the German Baptist settlers was very similar to that form of quietistic Evangelicalism already discussed in relation to the English Baptists. Theologically, the German Baptist movement stood closer to 17th century German Pietism and early 19th century English and American Evangelicalism than it did to the 16th century Anabaptist movement. This lack of a critical and transformative social ethic led them, as it did the English Baptist settlers, to conform uncritically to Colonial perceptions and processes.

---

3. H J Batts, A History of the Baptist Church in South Africa, pp 109, 111, 121, 126, 140, 170, 177.

4. Cf F H Haus, "The German Baptist Churches in South Africa", pp 18 & 32.

5. Cf A Phipson, "A resumé of the History of Baptist work in the Transkei" (Unpublished report) p 1.

6. Cf Keith Parker, Baptists in Europe : History and Confessions of Faith (Nashville : Broadman, 1982), p 22. Arguably they did not emulate the social concern of these early German pietists. Only in our century has pietism become synonymous with quietism.

The German Baptist origins can be traced to the conversion of Johann Gerhard Oncken at a London Methodist chapel in 1822.[7] In 1823, he was accepted as a missionary by the Continental Society attached to the English Reformed church in Hamburg. He was an enthusiastic and effective preacher and many were converted. Between 1826 and 1834, he struggled with the question of infant and believer's baptism. Finally, in 1834, he and his wife, together with five others, were baptized in the river Elbe by an American Baptist, Prof Sears, who constituted this small group as the first Baptist church in Germany.[8] Its establishment was important both in terms of its work in Europe and in terms of the influence it exerted through the German settlers who went to the Eastern Cape in 1857-8.

As others have addressed themselves to the details of the German Baptist churches, only a few of the principle features of this movement are noted here in order to establish the influence of their European roots on the Baptist German settlers.[9]

One central feature was that of extraordinary growth. Despite ongoing persecution, the German Baptists grew rapidly in numbers. There were many reasons for this. As an offshoot of the Evangelical revival, the German Baptists represented a new and vibrant movement whose growth was not inhibited by theological divisions within Baptist ranks, as was the case in England. Further, it was operating within a largely moribund religious context. State-controlled Lutheranism was stifled by rationalism and "rigid ecclesiasticism". In contrast, the Baptist movement was a fresh, lay-disseminated and enthusiastic movement, and many converts were won. A further factor was the dedication of the movement's leadership and members.

In South Africa, this pattern of extraordinary growth was repeated amongst the German settlers. In 1861, under the leadership of a layman named Carsten Langhein, they set out to increase the membership of their own churches. Within the first eight months their membership grew from 5 to 67, an increase of 1000%.[10] The legendary Hugo Gutsche arrived in 1867 and, within six months, the membership stood at a total of 317.

---

7. J H Rushbrooke, The Baptist Movement in the Continent of Europe (London : Carey Press, 1915) p 5 and Parker, ibid, pp 53ff.

8. Rushbrooke, ibid, p 7 and Vedder, op cit, p 397.

9. See, for example, William L Wagner, New Move forward in Europe : Growth Patterns of German speaking Baptists in Europe (South Pasadena : William Carey Library, 1978).

10. See Batts, op cit, pp 45-46 and Haus, op cit, p 3.

A second feature of the German Baptist movement was that of persecution. This persecution was carried out by the police, largely at the insistence of the German (Lutheran) clergy. The Baptists were accused of being Münsterites and Anabaptist extremists. Negative perceptions of the 16th century Anabaptists (re-enforced by Lutheran and Calvinist teachings) meant that when the modern Baptist movement arose in 19th century in Germany, Baptists were immediately objects of suspicion. Baptists, says Vedder, were seen as those who believe in "... propagating the Kingdom of Christ by the sword, in communism, polygamy and various other horrifying things."[11]

Despite the reforms of 1848-50, renewed persecution broke out between 1850-1854. In a reactionary backlash, certain privileged classes sought to overthrow earlier constitutional reforms, and persecution of both political and religious "dissidents" was increased. Persons who were not officially accredited (Lutheran) ministers of religion were singled out for especially severe treatment. In a manner painfully reminiscent of the 16th century, harassment, imprisonment, the confiscation of possessions, expulsion and flogging occurred.[12] Despite the largely a-political stance of the German Baptists, this persecution was indicative of the fact that civil and religious liberties cannot be artificially separated.

Because of pressure from the American and English Baptists, together with innovatory attempts by certain German Baptists to influence public opinion and parliamentary members, persecution lessened dramatically. Oncken and two others even met with King Frederick William IV in 1855. But it was only in 1875 that legal recognition was given to Baptist churches in Prussia (similar to the liberty attained in Hamburg in 1858). Other German states gradually followed suit.[13]

In South Africa, the German Baptists were not subjected to religious persecution. Nevertheless, the consistent persecution to which the German Baptists had been subjected had important consequences, both in Germany and in South Africa. Imprisonment, and the confiscation of goods and property, meant that the Baptists were generally poor. Consequently, their small financial surplus was used for internal growth and evangelism rather than for social activism. Furthermore, although contact was maintained between the Baptists in Germany and the Eastern Cape, the former could provide very

---

11. Vedder op cit, p 396.

12. Wagner, op cit, p 15 and Rushbrooke, op cit, p 23.

13. Rushbrooke, ibid, pp 23ff.

little in the way of financial support. For example, in 1870, the German Baptists planned to commence mission work in South Africa, but this did not materialise.[14] Similarly, in the Eastern Cape, the German settlers struggled to survive, and had few outside interests other than evangelism.[15]

Thirdly, from the middle of the 19th century, when persecution became less frequent, the Baptists in Germany were able to effect an organisational improvement. Church buildings were renovated or acquired. Attention was also given to increased unity, and they formed themselves into Associations (as had the American and English Baptists), all of which were linked to the German Baptist Union. The German Baptist churches in South Africa maintained contact with these German churches and only in 1955 did the German Bund dissolve and become part of the Border Baptist Association of the Baptist Union.[16] These ongoing contacts fostered the idea that the colonists' real "home" was in Germany. So much so that, until the First World War, the German Baptists in South Africa considered it essential to :

> teach religion through the German tongue during school hours, to sing German hymns and folksongs in the original language and to have at least four hours a week on German grammar and classical literature.[17]

An interesting aspect of the organisation of the churches in Germany was that Pastor Eduard Scheve encouraged the emergence of deaconesses in the church's ministry.[18] Sadly, this was not carried over into South Africa except in the form of women's organizations that existed alongside of, and dependent upon, the official male ministry.[19]

A fourth feature of the German Baptist tradition was their emphasis on evangelism. To achieve this aim, great emphasis was given to preaching, worship, the Sunday School, and the dissemination of books and tracts.

---

14. Rushbrooke, ibid, p 34.

15. For a description of the hardships suffered by the German Baptists on the Eastern Frontier see the memoirs of August Peinke and Juanita Henrietta (Kaffrarian Missionary Museum, King William's Town) 9pp and 19pp respectively.

16. Schwär and Pape, Germans in Kaffraria 1858-1958, p 75 and F H Haus, In Journeys Oft (SA Baptist Historical Society, 1989) p 17.

17. Haus, "The German Baptist churches in South Africa", p 41.

18. See Wagner, op cit, pp 32-34.

19. Cf Seventy-five Years : German Baptist Church, East London p 59.

Further, the German Baptists formulated the slogan "every Baptist a Missionary". At a conference held in Berlin in 1848, it was decided to use two thirds of their income for local use; the remaining third was to be sent to the American Board for foreign missionary work.[20] By 1849, a Union of Baptist churches had been formed and the new Union set itself four aims : the confession of faith; the strengthening of the fellowship; missionary activity; and the preparation of statistics of membership.[21] By 1913, there were 213 Baptist churches and 45,583 members in Germany. Evangelism was also undertaken in other countries in Europe, especially in Poland, Scandinavia, and Austria.

Certain elements of this legacy are significant because of their influence on South African Baptists. For example, the German Baptists placed great emphasis on the Great Commission; evangelism was their primary goal. In South Africa, the German Baptist churches were free to propagate their faith, and they were extremely successful in their evangelistic efforts, especially amongst the German settlers. It is also worth noting that they regarded evangelism and mission as synonymous.[22] This factor was probably a result of the influence of the American and British Baptists and because, in order to survive as a new movement, the German Baptists had to concentrate on gathering new members. Another important aspect of German Baptist evangelistic efforts was their European cultural bias. Whilst newly established churches in Russia were soon led by Russians, this pattern did not hold true outside of Europe. The promotion of indigenous leadership was not possible, says Rushbrooke, when dealing with "primitive and uncultured races elsewhere" because it was difficult to find "native workers of the right type".[23] Speaking of Baptists in Europe, Rushbrooke argues that differences of race, social conditions, culture and education did not greatly affect Baptist witness and churches. But this was not true of Africa where the work was not restricted to the European races. There colonialism and notions of white superiority prevented the growth of Baptist churches led by Africans.

---

20. Rushbrooke, op cit, p 22.

21. Rushbrooke, ibid, p 22-23.

22. Vedder, op cit, p 400.

23. Rushbrooke, op cit, pp 145-146.

Fifthly, increased growth within the denomination also made it possible to give attention to theological education. Oncken's desire to improve the theological training of pastors was initially resisted :

> Many of the most earnest of the brethren dreaded the substitution of a caste of priests for a universal priesthood, and feared ecclesiasticism and the limitation of the operations of the Holy Spirit.(24)

This amounted to a rejection of rigid state religion and the assertion of the importance of congregational participation, religious enthusiasm and flexibility.

Although Oncken managed to persuade his followers to change their minds about theological education, this anti-intellectualism was carried over into South Africa. There were very few educated pastors amongst the German Baptist settlers and the theological education received by these pastors was centered on the European context. This lack of South African input was reinforced by the fact that, right up until 1950, all the German Baptist pastors were "imported" from Germany.(25) As late as the second decade of the 20th century, Batts said this concerning South African-born pastors :

> It has long been our wish to get our young men with a knowledge of South African life and conditions to enter the ministry, but we have been mainly unfortunate.(26)

This meant that both the English and German-speaking Baptist pastors in South Africa retained a Euro-centric theology, rather than contextualising the Gospel in their new situation.

The sixth, and last, feature of the German Baptist tradition that requires mention here is that social issues were largely neglected. The ministries of the leading German Baptists of this period, though remarkable in many ways, reveal this omission. Rushbrooke offers this description of Oncken's character and ministry :

> Deep religious earnestness, a sense of the grace of God... a fervent love of the scriptures, a passion for souls were united with an almost inexhaustible energy, considerable powers of organization, eloquent and persuasive speech, and a courtly grace of manner...(27)

---

24. Rushbrooke, ibid, p 29; see also Wagner, op cit, pp 23 ff.

25. F Haus "The German Baptist Churches in South Africa", p 47.

26. Batts, op cit, p 175.

27. Rushbrooke, op cit, p 11.

Another important leader was Julius Köbner. Köbner was the son of a Jewish Rabbi and, as such, had received a good education and contributed greatly to the movement via his poetry, hymns and writings.[28] Gottfried Lehmann was baptized by Oncken in 1837 and became the pastor of the church in Berlin. He was gifted as a preacher and orator. It is significant, however, that none of these three leaders are described by their commentators as social prophets.

It would be false to suggest that social concern was entirely absent from the movement. Attention was given to the needs of widows, orphans and elderly pastors (through means of the Invalidenkasse) within the denomination. But no evidence of concern for social reform or transformation can be found. As Wagner puts it :

> It is significant that most of the church's social work was primarily on behalf of its own members and their families.[29]

The German Baptists were a small minority within the population and their movement was a relatively new one. These factors may explain their social reticence. Nevertheless, their failure to relate their faith more consciously to their social context (as well as their reluctance to be associated with the radicalism of 16th century Anabaptism) meant that they were later unprepared to resist Nazism.[30] This privatised legacy was also carried over into the theological praxis of the Baptist churches in South Africa.

The German Baptists, then, did not resemble their Anabaptist forebears. Partly, this lack of identification was a conscious effort on the part of the 19th century Baptists, similar to that of some English Baptists : both groups repudiated Anabaptist extremism. Consequently, the more radical social implications of Anabaptism were never central to the theology of the German Baptists. Furthermore, the German Baptist movement, although it grew rapidly, never became a mass movement in the way that Anabaptism did. The membership and power base of the German Baptists was small and they were not in a position to challenge the socio-political status quo in the way that the English Baptists of the 17th century were able to do during the Civil War.

---

28. Vedder op cit, p 398.

29. Wagner, op cit, p 35.

30. Eg the Baptists were not signatories of the Barmen Declaration of 1934; see Wagner, ibid, p 48. Cf also D T Priestly, "The Baptist response in Germany to the Third Reich" IN (ed) R Linder, God and Caesar (Kansas State University, 1971) pp 102-123.

The German Baptist churches, as an offshoot of the evangelical revival, took on the more pietistic elements of this movement. For example, many of Spurgeon's writings were read in Germany and Spurgeon was present at the very meeting which sent Gutsche to South Africa.[31]

In conclusion, then, it can be said that the theological praxis of the English and German Baptist settlers was, as was to be expected, dominated by a Euro-centric theology. Their theology was also largely privatised in that social issues were largely neglected and evangelism was engaged in without sufficient cogniscence being taken of the context within which converted persons and groups lived. Baptist members and pastors regarded Europe as their real "home", even though the majority never returned. Intermittent contact through letters and visits meant that these churches were Euro-centered and "backward looking" in terms of their theological views and concerns. In addition, the Baptist settlers were drawing on a very restricted understanding of the Baptist tradition, one which failed to prepare them adequately for the conflicts and confusion of the Eastern Cape frontier. This Euro-centric and privatised emphasis on the part of the English and German 19th century settlers may have been understandable, even unavoidable. The tragedy is that the 20th century South African Baptists, rather than being constructively critical of their 19th century roots, have largely perpetuated the theological limitations of these early Baptist pioneers.

B. THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS AND COLONIALISM.

During the 19th century, the Baptists that came to South Africa conformed with, and actively participated in, the Colonial process of military conquest, land dispossession, and a racist rejection of the political rights and socio-economic structures of the black people of South Africa. Whereas previously, the Baptists in Europe and England were numbered amongst the under classes, the South African Baptists were now part of the conquering, settler class. Their privatised understanding of the Christian faith both prevented a radical application of their faith to the new circumstances that confronted them, and provided a convenient means of either withdrawing from social involvement or legitimating white self-interest.

---

31. See Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 22, 127 and 131; Taylor Street (King Williams' Town) Jubilee, p 6; Where it all began; and F H Haus, Carsten Langhein (SA Baptist Historical Society) p 12.

1. Colonialism in South Africa.

By the time that the Baptists arrived in South Africa, the Colonial process had been under way for nearly two centuries. The Dutch, French and English settlers had, by the end of the 18th century, conquered or occupied most of the land between the Cape and Port Elizabeth, as well as parts of the Karoo. During this time, the indigenous San and the Khoikhoi, as well as some of the Xhosa, had been dispossessed of their land, deprived of their traditional way of life, and had been killed or compelled to work as labourers on "white" farms. Cumulatively, colonialism was manifested in white military dominance, the imposition of European cultural and legal systems and the control of the settlers over the economic resources and development of South Africa.(32)

With regard to the Eastern Cape, the land issue had long been central. In 1770, the border between the encroaching trek-boers and the black tribes was the Gamtoos river. In 1778, the Cape Governor Plettenburg made a treaty with some Xhosa chieftains that the Fish River was to be the new boundary.(33) But this river does not run straight down to the sea, thus the agreed line actually stretched from the upper reaches of the Fish down to the mouth of the Bushman's river. Both Collins, who advanced the view that settlers should occupy the Zuurveld, and popular settler views ever since, misinterpreted this treaty. They regarded as theirs large tracts of land which had not been given to them by the chieftains who had made their mark on Plettenburg's treaty, let alone all the chieftains who were not part of this agreement.(34) Nevertheless, the brutal expulsion of Xhosa from the Zuurveld went ahead and, by 1820, the Zuurveld was being occupied by Baptist, and other, settlers.(35) In 1829, the Kat River valley was "given" to the Khoikhoi by the colonial authorities but the Fish River boundary continued to be in dispute. By 1847, first the land between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers, and then between the Keiskamma and the Kei, had been appropriated by the colonial authorities. British Kaffraria was created

---

32. L Thompson, A History of South Africa (New Haven & London : Yale University Press, 1990) pp 1-109.

33. See Ben Maclennan, A Proper Degree of Terror (Johannesburg : Ravan, 1986) pp 46, 58.

34. Cf Ross, John Philip : 1775-1851, pp 23-29 and Maclennan, ibid, pp 64-81, 91, 102-103.

35. Maclennan, ibid, pp 123-126, 137, 222-226.

in 1848, what is today the Ciskei was incorporated into the Cape colony in 1865, and the various parts of the Transkei were annexed between 1879 and 1894.[36]

Because the Baptists first established their churches in the Eastern Cape region, this chapter concentrates on the settler-Xhosa conflicts that raged on this frontier. Arguably, however, Baptists who settled in Natal or on the diamond and gold fields, equally revealed their complicity with British imperialism.

It is not by accident that C Saunders refers to the successive Frontier conflicts as the "100 Years War".[37] The Xhosa determinedly resisted the intrusion of the settlers, and it was only after the cattle-killing of 1857 that their power was broken, though they did not cease to resist.[38] Further to the North, both the British and the Boers occupied land in what became the provinces of Natal and the Orange Free State. The Zulu resisted for a period, but their military power was decisively broken between 1872 and 1879. In turn, the Pedi of the Eastern Transvaal were overthrown between 1876-79 and the Ndebele of Mzilikazi in 1893.

There were several key elements in this struggle between the Africans and the white invaders. The first of these was the economic dimension. The primary cause of conflict between the white settlers and the indigenous inhabitants was their mutual desire for land (for both grazing and agriculture). Disputed points included the question of how the land was to be used and individual, as opposed to community, ownership. These fundamental conflicts were expressed in cattle-raiding, accusations of treaty-breaking, suspicion and war.

In speaking about the economic effects of colonialism, Bundy has pointed out that in order for the market economy of the Cape Colony to grow, it was necessary for the traditional Cape Nguni economy to be profoundly disturbed in order to "release cattle, land and labour from their non-

---

36. Davenport, South Africa : A Modern History (London : Macmillan, 1987) pp 76 & 99-103 and Paul Maylam, A History of the African People of South Africa (Cape Town : David Philip, 1986) pp 38 ff and 96 ff.

37. Quoted by J B Peires in "Nxele, Ntsikana and the origins of the Xhosa religious reaction" Journal of African History 20:1 (1979) p 51. This article discusses the importance of the religious dimension of the frontier conflict.

38. Cf J B Peires, The Dead will Arise (Johannesburg : Ravan, 1989). See Peires' The House of Phalo (Johannesburg : Ravan, 1981) for a history of the Xhosa people.

commercial employment in Nguni homesteads and villages."[39] As these two economic systems were mutually incompatible, they could not both survive. The Xhosa dispossession of land, therefore, cannot be seen in isolation from the economic, social and political interests of the encroaching colonialists. The settlers gained economic control, first over agriculture, and later, over the mining and manufacturing industries.[40]

The second dimension of the conflict was military in nature. The superior military technology of the Boers and British meant that the colonists obtained the land by military force and, thereafter, maintained their dominance by means of laws that favoured white settlers.

The socio-cultural issue was a third dimension of colonialism. The customs, beliefs, world-views and traditional way of life of the Africans were profoundly disturbed by the arrival of whites in their territories. Not only the settlers, magistrates, soldiers and traders, but also the missionaries played a role in this process of social dislocation. Because the latter largely failed to distinguish between the Christian faith and their Western culture, their efforts resulted in a serious conflict of loyalties. Christianity, because it was seen as part and parcel of European culture (which included agricultural practices, the design of houses, marriage practices, clothing, language, and political loyalties), contributed to the undermining of African traditional culture and political power. As one chieftain said "when my people become Christians, they cease to be my people."[41]

This thumbnail sketch shows that the Colonial onslaught had a direct and profound effect on the total world-view and the socio-political and economic structures of traditional African societies. Whilst the settlers were the military victors, their victory resulted in a complex legacy of injustice, distrust, racism, and institutionalized white supremacy.

---

39. The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) p 32. Also see C W de Kiewiet's earlier discussion of the "underdevelopment of the natives" in A History of South Africa (Oxford : University Press, 1957) pp 82, 180 ff and 197 ff.

40. Davenport, op cit, p 97 and J Cochrane, Servants of Power (Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1987) pp 55-149.

41. Bundy, op cit, p 41.

2. Christianity and Colonialism.

What, one may well ask, were the reactions of the churches to colonialism? Much has already been published on the missionary enterprise[42] and the issue of Christianity and colonialism.[43] Central to the debate is an awareness of the ambiguity of the role of the missionaries.[44] They were caught between their concern for the black people of South Africa and their loyalties towards their own group. At times, the missionaries sided with the indigenous victims of colonialism. For example, the earlier Moravian missionaries such as George Schmidt and, later, certain LMS missionaries (such as Revs Johannes van der Kemp, James Read and John Philip) were greatly maligned by the white settlers. This was because the latter were not convinced of the "need for and desirability of such missionary enthusiasm" and also saw these missionary activities as "a threat to the social life of the settler community".[45] Philip, in particular, evoked the ire of the settler community because his agitation resulted in the proclamation of Ordinance 50 of 1828 (which repealed discriminatory legislation with regard to the Khoikhoi). His controversial Researches in South Africa appeared in the same year. Subsequently, Philip was active in the Eastern frontier region. Although he was not opposed to the land between the Keiskamma and the Kei becoming part of the Colony, he sought to have the rights of the Xhosa to this land secured under British law.[46]

Although evidence does exist for the attempted interventions of missionaries on behalf of the black people amongst whom they worked, they were powerless to halt the tide of white settlement.

---

42. Eg earlier works such as C P Grove's The Planting of Christianity in South Africa Vols 1-4, (London : Lutterworth, 1948).

43. Eg N Majeke's The Role of Missionaries in Conquest (Johannesburg : Society of Young Africa, 1952) and, more recently, W Saayman, Christian Mission in South Africa (Pretoria : UNISA, 1991) and Jean and John Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution Vol 1 (Chicago : University Press, 1991).

44. See Monica Wilson, "Missionaries : Conquerors or Servants of God?" SAO (March 1966, reprinted January 1983) pp 13-16 and C Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid, (Cape Town : David Philip, 1988) pp 42-64.

45. J W de Gruchy, The Church Struggle in South Africa, pp 2 and 12 ff and Andrew Ross, op cit, especially pp 38-44 and 77-115.

46. See Grove op cit, pp 250 ff.

Their own position was constantly compromised by their lack of power and their loyalties towards their own social group. There is, thus, another side to the story. Certain missionaries did openly align themselves with the settlers and propagate the extension of colonial rule in areas still under black control.[47] For example, in a manifesto issued by several senior missionaries in 1852, it was openly stated that :

> We earnestly disclaim any wish to establish a missionary interest apart from, and far less antagonistic to, the colonial interest.[48]

This manifesto amounts to a theological rationale for colonialism and a defence of the settler enterprise. It is for this reason that Saayman argues that the missionaries were inextricably entangled with capitalism, racism, land ownership, deculturation and nationalism.[49] In the words of Villa-Vicencio,

> Being custodians of the religion of the status quo, the missionaries consciously and unconsciously served the prevailing ideology of imperialist expansion.[50]

After this summary of the varying reactions of Christian missionaries and churches to colonialism, attention can now be turned to an examination of the Baptist response to this violent process.

3. The Baptists conform to Colonialism.

The Baptists first came to this country, not as missionaries, but as settlers. Consequently, their world-view was from the very outset closely intertwined with that of the settlers. In addition, they not only passively benefitted from the activities of the soldiers and other settlers, but they actively participated in the military, socio-economic and political conquest of the Xhosa and other peoples. These criticisms are further borne out by the Baptists' adoption of the settler ideology which governed the attitudes and actions of whites on the frontier. These three factors, then, are

---

47. See G Cuthbertson, "The English-speaking Churches and Colonialism" IN (ed) C Villa-Vicencio, Theology and Violence (Johannesburg : Skotaville, 1987) pp 15-30.

48. Quoted in D Williams, "The Missionaries on the Eastern Cape Frontier of the Cape Colony, 1799-1853" (Unpublished D Phil, University of the Witwatersrand, 1959) Appendix K.

49. Saayman, op cit, pp 22-35.

50. Villa-Vicencio, op cit, p 44.

discussed below, namely : their arrival as settlers; their participation in Xhosa dispossession; and their adoption of a settler ideology.

a) The Baptists came as settlers, not as missionaries.

Why did the Baptists come to South Africa? Not as a result of the efforts of the Baptist Missionary Society but as part of the Colonial government's efforts to secure the frontier.

The English and German settlers did not come to South Africa for religious reasons, to preach the Gospel or to serve the interests of the local inhabitants. Both Hudson-Reed and Akers state that one of the reason why the settlers came to South Africa was to do the work of evangelism amongst the indigenous population.(51) But, if this was so, why did they not proceed to do evangelistic work amongst the blacks from the outset? Baptist missionary work amongst the blacks only started towards the end of the century, many decades after their arrival. The primary motive of the settlers was not evangelistic but, as Batts admits, economic :

> ...the Settlers of 1820 came out to South Africa in the hope of finding means of livelihood, and some opportunity of improvement and advantage at present denied to them in the home country.(52)

The settlers were a group of people who, driven by socio-economic circumstances in Europe, such as the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, bad harvests and poor chances of social advancement, hoped to make a new life for themselves.(53) They were lured by the Colonial officials' extravagant promises of rich land and they arrived in South Africa with little or no comprehension of the fact that they were to be a cheap means for the Colonial government to keep a troublesome border secure.(54)

Because the Baptists came here only as settlers, there were no Baptist missionaries working amongst the Xhosa for most of the 19th century. Although "at home" some Baptists were involved in social critique and

---

51. Cf Hudson-Reed, Together, p 10 and Akers, "South African Baptists involved in Missions to the other than white groups in South Africa", p 10.

52. Batts, op cit, p 3.

53. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 23ff.

54. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 29ff discusses to what extent the settlers realised what was in store for them.

activism on behalf of the disenfranchised and exploited, there were no Baptists amongst the few missionary champions of the Khoikhoi or Xhosa.

Not only were the Baptist settlers "out of step" with many Baptists in England, but they also behaved very differently from the Baptist missionaries in other parts of the Empire. In Jamaica, for example, missionaries went out to work amongst the slaves in 1817. By 1822 the churches they established had 2,700 members and by 1830 they recorded a total of 10,838 baptized members. Why was this? Firstly, the Baptists went there as missionaries rather than settlers and, thus, no conflict of interest resulted. Secondly, they identified with the slaves, suffered at the hands of the officials and settlers during the slave revolt, and campaigned against slavery in England. Consequently, they were regarded as heroes by the people amongst whom they worked. These Baptists, it was said :

> .. have been the unflinching, untiring friends of the negro. No threats have daunted them, no insults or persecutions have driven them from the field. They are now reaping their reward in the devoted attachment of the people...(55)

In India, Baptist missionaries such as William Carey and the American, Miles Bronson, were actively involved in struggles to deliver the people of Bengal and Assam from oppressive social structures and the negative effects of British colonialism. Baptists, says Frederick Downs,

> ... as a consequence of their own status and history, had special reason to be sensitive to issues of social justice and the conditions under which the poor lived.(56)

In South Africa, as is argued below, the Baptists' history and social conscience were submerged beneath white self-interest.

The fact that these Baptists were not specifically "sent out" as missionaries by their churches or by the BMS had two further consequences. The first of these was that neither the German nor English churches in South Africa received much in the way of support, financial or otherwise, from "home". The social effect of this was to make them feel beleaguered and misunderstood.(57) This is probably best reflected in the emotive letter written by Rev Davies concerning the English missionary press' support of the blacks :

---

55. J Clifford, The English Baptists, p 159.

56. Frederick S Downs, "Social influences on Nineteenth-Century Baptist Missionaries in India" Amer Bapt Q 8 : 4 (1989) p 252.

57. Cf Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 68, 148, 150-1 and 75 years : German Baptist Church of East London, p 54.

> I understand that in our native land Christian sympathy is turned exclusively towards the Kaffirs. Every instance of suffering amongst them is repeated in doleful accents in the parlour, in the pulpit, and on the missionary platform. But nothing is said about the Poor Settlers, only that "they are wicked christians".[58]

A second consequence was that, cut off from "home" and finding themselves in an often hostile environment, they turned to existing settlers for direction and support. As farmers, small urban traders and craftsmen, they had interests which coincided with those of the settlers rather than the Xhosa. This, in turn, gave rise to their acceptance of the dominant settler ideology.

It can be seen, then, that the Baptist settlers, cut off from support from home, out of touch with 19th century English Evangelical social critique, uninfluenced by contrary missionary opinion, with no real contact with independent Xhosa tribes, and committed to the promotion of their own settler interests, were, socially speaking, incapable of developing a prophetic Christian approach to their frontier context. Their Christian faith was practiced within the confines of their personal lives and the spiritual needs of their fellow settlers. For the rest, they sought to survive and improve their prospects, even if this was ultimately at the expense of the indigenous African population.

b) The Baptists participated in the Frontier Wars and were involved in the dispossession of Xhosa Land.

All those who lived on the frontier were engaged in an intense struggle for survival and a prolonged competition for grazing land and water. As even a cursory examination of museums such as the Settler Museum in Grahamstown will reveal, survival was no easy task. Farms were only with great effort developed; often they were abandoned, as settlers moved to town to seek work or to start their own small businesses. In accordance with the schemes of the Colonial officials, settlers were called out to serve in commandos against the Xhosa, who periodically invaded in a desperate attempt to regain land and cattle. Baptist records from this period bear testimony to the harsh privations caused by the climate, disease and poverty.[59] Stories abound concerning churches that were partly built, destroyed and later

---

58. Quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 86.

59. For example, Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings, pp 61-115 and the Kariega Baptist Church Centenary.

rebuilt, and of settlers who died as a result of poverty or Xhosa attacks.

What, then, can be said concerning the relationship between these early Baptist settlers and the process of colonialism? On the one hand, they were victims of the machinations of Colonial officials. From the outset they were not informed of the motives of these officials, and they were expected to farm in unsuitable areas as well as cope with repeated Xhosa incursions. In 1809, Colonel Collins proposed that the Xhosa be expelled from the Zuurveld (ie the area between the Bushmans and Fish rivers) and be replaced by settlers. In 1817, Governor Somerset officially advocated this proposal. In 1819, Chief Ndlambe and his warriors attacked Grahamstown in an attempt to rid their land of the encroaching whites. In a manner tragically contrary to their intentions, this attack finally convinced the authorities in England that extensive emigration from England would be the cheapest and most effective solution to the border conflicts.(60) The arrival of the 1820 settlers (including a few Baptists) was the end result of Collins's and Somerset's schemes.

Subsequently, the Colonial authorities decided to send the German legionaries (who had signed up to fight for England in the Crimean War) to the Eastern Cape, in order to make use of their military skills in defending the Eastern frontier. When these men failed to settle down to the lonely agrarian and military life expected of them, a number of German families, including some Baptists, were sent out in the hope that eventually the land would be more extensively farmed and protected from Xhosa incursion. They certainly fulfilled these hopes for, as E Gansen of Government House in Pretoria wrote in the 1958 German Settler Centenary Document, these men were "invaluable in the defence of the Cape Colony against attacks from the war-like native tribes".(61) The essentially military role of both the German legionaries and settlers was reflected in the fact that sites were chosen for them on the basis of strategic considerations rather than agricultural suitability. These Germans were subsidized by the British Government, given land (or enabled to buy it cheaply) and were used as military auxiliaries.(62) Significantly, these military and colonizing functions

---

60. See Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 26-29 and 36ff.

61. Schwär and Pape, Germans in Kaffraria : 1858-1958, p 6 and Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 99ff.

62. Schwär and Pape, ibid, pp 15 and 38.

were the cause of conflict between the German legionnaires and the Xhosa at the Berlin Mission Society's station at Bethel :

> Dr Kropf was a missionary and as such naturally took a sympathetic view of the needs of his Black flock. There was no sympathy lost between the Legionnaires and the Xhosas, who resented the coming of the former into their territory.(63)

But, if the Baptists were, initially at least, victims of the Colonial process, they later supported its aims with some enthusiasm. In so doing, they became participants in the process of colonialism. In the same way that the German settlers protected and developed previously Xhosa-owned land, the English Baptists were equally willing to protect their property from Xhosa "incursion" and were active in the frontier wars. Hudson-Reed mentions the case of one of the early Baptist leaders, William Shepherd, who "advocated the opening of Port Frances for landing military supplies... and was mentioned for his bravery in the Lower Albany in the war of 1846-1847."(64) G W Cross, the pastor of the Grahamstown church, enlisted as a "trooper, medical assistant and voluntary chaplain" in the Ninth Frontier War within three months of his arrival in South Africa.(65) In addition to the willingness of the Baptists to fight in these wars, the friendly association between the Baptists and the Colonial authorities was further illustrated in the attendance of a great many senior Colonial officials, including the then Governor Sir Henry Barkly, at the opening of the Alice Baptist church in 1874.(66) G W Cross even spoke of the extension of the British Empire as "a great dream".(67)

c) The Baptists adopt a settler ideology.

If ideology is broadly defined as those judgments and attitudes which govern the way in which a certain group justifies and propagates its community life, the Baptists adopted what was definitely a settler ideology.

---

63. Ibid, p 21.

64. Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 76a.

65. C W Parnell, G W Cross : The man who gave his Life (The SA Baptist Historical Society), p 4 and Cross Ours is the Frontier pp 33ff.

66. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 133-134. Similarly, Baptist leaders enjoyed good relation with senior political leaders such as Presidents Reitz and Kruger, both of whom attended inaugural Baptist church services, cf Batts, op cit, pp 189-197.

67. G W Cross, The Baptist Union of South Africa : A History and some reflections (Grahamstown : Grocott & Sherry, 1898) p 12.

It was also what Marx would have termed a "ruling class ideology" because it legitimized the interests of the colonists over and against those of the dispossessed Xhosa.(68) It was this perspective that, on the one hand, legitimized the view that the whites had the right to protect the land they had supposedly obtained from the Xhosa "by fair and proper means"and, on the other hand, developed a critical and negative view of Xhosa society. This ideology thus had two features, the way that the settlers perceived themselves and the way that they viewed the Xhosa.

Inherent in this settler ideology was the belief in the superiority of white culture and civilization. That the Xhosa were not only barbarians but also pagans was commonly believed.(69) Although the racist elements of the settler ideology only became dominant after 1870, during the preceding period, the settlers definitely regarded themselves as superior to the black tribes whom they referred to as Caffres/Kaffirs (unbelievers), barbarians and savages. These "natives" were looked upon as being primitive people, necessarily subject to the European races.(70)

Within the churches, this assumption of superiority was transmuted (and thereby disguised) into an attitude of benevolence and paternalism. Baptist theology was linked to a futurist form of eschatology, according to which blacks and whites were seen as being "one in Christ" in a spiritual sense, but not in a political or ecclesiastical sense. This amounted to a spiritualization of Christian unity and equality. In effect, cultural and racial divisions overrode religious unity. The racism evidenced on the frontier was not simply an attitude or prejudice, but amounted to (and justified) the systematic dispossession and exploitation of the black inhabitants of South Africa. The Xhosa, in the words of Sir George Grey, were expected to "become a part of ourselves, with a common faith and common interests, useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue.(71)

The settler ideology also functioned as a legitimation of white conquest and control. At least five elements of this rationalizing process can be identified : the whites were blameless; they acted on the basis of

---

68. See J Leatt et al (eds), Contending Ideologies in South Africa (Cape Town : David Philip, 1986) p 274ff.

69. See Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid, pp 47 & 54.

70. Ross, op cit, pp 94, 192, 222-223.

71. Cf Davenport, op cit, p 101.

pure motives; the Xhosa broke treaties; they invaded the settler areas; and they stole cattle.

To begin with, many settlers perceived themselves as blameless. In a letter written to protest against the favouring of the Xhosa cause by the English public, a Baptist pastor, the Rev William Davies, admitted "solitary acts of impropriety", but went on to defend the settlers in these words :

> As a body, I confidently affirm it, they are as industrious, as honourable, as free from being guilty of rapine, plunder, and outrage against their neighbours, whether black or white, as any given number of men in England or anywhere else.(72)

But this defence of the settlers cannot be accepted as valid. For one thing, the Xhosa were willing to co-exist with the settlers and share land over which they had previously held absolute sway. The settlers, however, refused this option and expelled the Xhosa.(73) Whilst this fundamental outrage with respect to the appropriation of Xhosa land by the white settlers may have been suppressed by the descendants of the settlers, it would be foolish to think that the Xhosa-speaking people suffer from an equally distorted memory. They have not forgotten. The black poet Manisi produced these lines for the 1820 Settler memorial :

> We thank you tribes of the settler people
> For you entered carrying the Bible
> Saying that we should take up the tome
> And lay down custom and tradition
> We took the Bible and followed you
> The minister turned into a soldier
> He shouldered his rifle and fired his cannon:
> The mountains of Rharhabe roared,
> Dust rose up and the land was aflame.(74)

It is naïve to suppose that this sense of outrage and the economic consequences of land possession had no effect on black/white relations in the context of mission or in the development of Baptist denominational structures. The conquered and the conquerors could not meet on equal terms, especially since the Gospel which the Baptists preached ignored the context in which blacks and whites lived and thereby failed to apply the Christian principles of justice and love to this social context.

---

72. Quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 88.

73. Peires, House of Phalo, p 59.

74. Quoted by L Pato, "Religion and Conflict : A Southern African Experience" (Unpublished article) p 4 from Jeff Opland Xhosa Oral Poetry : Aspects of Black South African Tradition (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1983) p 199.

A further dimension of the outrages committed by the whites (conveniently ignored by Rev Davies in the quotation cited above) were those treacherous acts committed by the colonial authorities from which the settlers benefited directly. Thus, after the 1818 war against Ndlambe, in which the colonial soldiers had been aided by Ngqika, Governor Charles Somerset "rewarded" this support by appropriating a large part of Ngqika's own land between the Kat and Keiskamma rivers and by making Ngqika responsible for the impossible task of halting the cross-border cattle raiding![75] Moreover, whilst it is true that the settlers suffered losses as a result of the various wars, it is also true that they benefited from the wars in that they were reimbursed by the government. In addition, during the 6th and 7th Frontier wars, for example, they profited from the sale of forage and food, wagon hire and increased land prices.[76] Examples such as these provide a valuable corrective to the way in which many South African Baptists, especially those in the theologically and politically conservative Eastern Cape, have traditionally viewed their 19th century heritage.

But it is not only the 19th century writers who have written in this vein. Several 20th century Baptist writers have continued the settler historiographical tradition and perpetuated the myth of the courageous whites who carved out a new life for themselves in the midst of brutal and unprovoked attack from the black races. One Baptist writer said in 1933 :

> "Our pioneers dared the estranging sea to make new homes in a far off and little known land associated with barbarians, wild beasts and a Settlement for the defence of the frontier of Kaffirland."[77]

Clearly this writer had an excessively low view of the Xhosa, calling them barbarians, and regarding them as being on a par with wild beasts. Such statements are evidence of the white ideology which confused Western technological ability with social and moral superiority.

Another aspect of settler self-perception was that <u>they acted on the basis of pure motives</u>. Thus, in the 1958 Foreword of the German Centenary document, E L G Schnell wrote :

---

75. Peires, <u>op cit</u>, p 79-80. Concerning the treatment of Chungwa and Ndlambe see pp 56-61. Davenport also discusses the results of the colonial officials' misunderstanding of Xhosa political leadership, <u>ibid</u>, pp 36ff, 43, 84.

76. Peires, <u>ibid</u>, p 124.

77. E G Evans, <u>The Romance of the Early Years</u>, pp 39 and 25. Also Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 28 & 83.

> It is the story of men who, inspired by the noblest motives, were ready to sacrifice comfort, companionship and material gain in the service of their Lord and their fellow men and who, in giving all, gained rich spiritual rewards and left names who will always be honoured.(78)

Admittedly, there were, perhaps, individuals such as Hugo Gutsche who fall into this category, but to say that the German (or English) settlers came here for reasons other than their own dire economic need is simply false. Nor can it be denied that after less than a generation of genuine poverty and suffering, the settlers were able to own land (taken from the Xhosa) and gain very definite material, socio-political and economic advantages. The third element of the settler ideology was that the Xhosa broke treaties that the settlers made with them. Thus, Rev E G Evans, wrote this concerning the frontier agreements :

> Far off in the Eastern Districts of the Cape the scattered colonists were too few to keep the Kaffirs to their agreed-upon eastern-side of the Great Fish River. These barbarians treated their pledges as scraps of paper and, when it pleased them, they crossed the river to plunder cattle.(79)

What can be said in response to this accusation of treaty-breaking? Firstly, the colonial authorities themselves did not always honour their agreements. One particularly offensive example that can be cited is the death or, more correctly, the murder of the Xhosa chieftain, Hintsa. In 1835, his personal safety was assured by Governor D' Urban and he voluntarily entered the British camp on the Gcuwa river only to find that he was actually a prisoner. When he made an attempt to escape, he was shot. "Then some soldiers cut off his ears as keepsakes to show around the military camps. Others tried to dig out his teeth with bayonets. Thus died Hintsa, king of the Xhosa, for trusting the honour of a British Governor."(80)

It must also be borne in mind that the individual chieftains with whom the colonists were dealing only had influence over a certain area. Because the Xhosa had no centralized government, a treaty made with one chieftain had

---

78. E L G Schnell in Schwär and Pape, op cit, p 3.

79. Evans, op cit, p 3. This view is closely repeated in the Eastern Province Baptist association pamphlet issued in 1960, entitled Where it all began, no pagination.

80. Peires, op cit, p 111. Also H J Halse, "Autobiographical Manuscript" (1817-1880), (Cory Library, Grahamstown) pp 28-31.

no bearing over adjoining territories nor even over his own chiefly successors.

The charge that treaties were regarded as mere scraps of paper can, in fact, be more justly levelled at the colonists. For example, the terms of the treaties regarding cattle theft made by Stockenström were modified by his successor, Napier, without Xhosa agreement. And Napier's successor, Maitland, simply tore up the Stockenström treaties and furnished his own in 1844. In fact, Maitland's so-called treaties were not treaties at all, they were imposed on the chieftains and differed significantly from Stockenström's treaties in that the much abused commando system was again permitted and traditional Xhosa customs, such as lobola, were attacked.[81] It was in this tense situation that a certain Tsili, who had stolen an axe, was rescued by his friends who chopped off a fellow prisoner's hand in the process. The whites have ever since called the ensuing conflict the War of the Axe, whereas the Xhosa regarded its as a war about land, boundaries, armed colonial frontier posts, a return of the commando system and the loss of the authority of the chieftains over Xhosa converts.[82] Given this background, it is instructive to note Rev Evans' explanation of the causes for the "War of the Axe" :

> This so strangely named a war, was due to the theft of an axe by a Kaffir, the worse for drink, from a Kaffir Truck store in Fort Beaufort... the refusal of the chief of the tribe concerned to surrender the murderer of the Hottentot was followed by a war, for which Kaffirland was impatient.[83]

By such a merging of truth and fiction are born the myths on which the white ideological justifications rest.

A fourth element of the settler ideology was that the Xhosa invaded settler areas. William Miller, the founder of the Baptist Church in South Africa, said this about the "Kaffir invasion" of settler land :

> For generations this part of South Africa has been the source of fearful strife and contention between man and man, it has been here that darkness and light have come into fearful collision, war has raged, and property and life have been destroyed to a sad extent. Up to the year 1818, the colonial government were unable

---

81. Cf Ross, op cit, pp 196-197.

82. Peires, op cit, pp 126-134.

83. Evans, op cit, pp 30-31.

> to maintain the possession of the frontier districts from repeated Kaffir invasion...[84]

Whilst it is true that the colonists were on occasion attacked, cognizance must be taken of the reasons for these actions. The most important reason, and the basis of all the subsequent conflict, was the appropriation of Xhosa land by the settlers. For example, the Xhosa attack on Grahamstown in 1819 (immediately prior to the arrival of the 1820 settlers) was the consequence of at least two prior events. On the one hand, after the 4th Frontier war of 1811, the Xhosa had been expelled from land they previously occupied and were driven beyond the Fish river, despite the willingness of the people of Chungwa and Ndlambe to co-exist with the settlers.[85] On the other hand, Colonel T Brereton had attacked Ndlambe in December 1818, in reprisal for Ndlambe's defeat of Ngqika (an internal Xhosa conflict), and driven off 23,000 cattle.[86] No wonder that in 1819, the Xhosa attacked the city of Grahamstown in an effort to expel the white settlers who were occupying the land regarded by the Xhosa as their own and who had recently deprived them of their means of survival by carrying off their cattle!

Even in recently published Baptist writings, this 19th century settler ideology has been perpetuated. In the Church Centenary documents of Grahamstown and Kwelegha within the "border" area, no discussion is to be found about the complex nature of the 19th century frontier conflicts.[87] This is a deafening silence. Nor is there any indication that the Baptist Union, as a whole, has questioned the settler ideology discussed above. Indeed, in a thesis on Baptist mission work written in 1978, the central elements of this ideology are simply repeated :

> The Xhosas were still very warlike and felt terribly threatened by the presence of the growing number of Whites who were "invading" their traditional hunting grounds. Each time the Xhosa tribesmen bore down on the White settlers destroying their homes and crops, killing settlers and making off with their

---

84. Baptist Magazine (London) Vol 17: Fourth Series (July 1854) pp 432-433, quoted by S Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 4. Also Batts, op cit, pp 200-207.

85. Peires, op cit, pp 58 and 60. A further dimension of this was the ongoing conflict between the Xhosa chiefs, Ndlambe and Ngqika. Indeed, it was the inability of the Xhosa to unite against their common foe that rendered them so vulnerable to the colonial onslaught.

86. Cf Peires, ibid, p 63 and Ross, op cit, pp 31-32.

87. One and a Half Centuries of Grahamstown Baptist Witness : 1820-1970 and Kwelegha Centenary Anniversary : 1888-1988.

> cattle and other stock and furniture the already wide communication gap grew even wider.[88]

Although this statement indicates some awareness that the Xhosa tribes felt threatened by their white neighbours, the word "invading" is placed in inverted commas. Further, in speaking of the "hunting grounds" of the Xhosa, Akers confuses the South African situation with that of the American Indians. The Xhosa economic and cultural structure was a settled agro-pastoralist one. Finally, this quotation clearly implies that the "warlike" Xhosa were the invaders. The final sentence of this quotation notes that "the already wide communication gap became even wider" but fails to relate this fact to subsequent Baptist missionary and institutional developments.

Finally, according to the settlers, the Xhosa stole cattle. This is certainly true, but there is little consciousness amongst contemporary white Baptists that the cattle-raiding was a symptom and consequence of the central issue of the loss of land. Without land, cattle could not be raised, and cattle were essential for the physical survival as well as the psychological and political well-being of the Xhosa people. Hudson-Reed speaks of the Rev Temlett who had :

> shared with his fellow Settlers the difficulties and dangers of a "black and white" frontier. He knew the sudden wild alarm of barbarous depredations by land-hungry and cattle-greedy people.[89]

Contrary to this rather one-sided view, cattle raiding was, in fact, perpetrated by both sides and was extremely difficult to control. One central problem was that of correctly identifying the culprits. The commando system used by the settlers was greatly abused and only inflamed the situation. Further, certain individuals amongst both the settlers and the Xhosa broke whatever regulations were in force at the time. But it was the chieftains who carried the bulk of the blame. They were expected to do what no-one else could do, namely prevent cattle raiding. It was seldom recognised that chieftains could not control all their own subjects, and certainly not the subjects of other chieftains. Yet, in the popular settler imagination, it was the Xhosa who were solely responsible for this intractable problem.

The purpose of the forgoing discussion is not to exonerate the Xhosa from blame, but to point out the historical fallacies of the settler ideology

---

88. Akers, op cit, p 11.

89. Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 156.

(and its subsequent entrenchment in Baptist settler historiography and popular thinking). Because the Gospel is, inevitably, experienced and preached within a historical context, there will always be an ideological element within the church's theology and praxis. Missionary history, Hans-Werner Gensichen tells us, provides examples of both possibilities : on the one hand, ideological submission to vested interests and, on the other hand, alert criticism of ideology.(90) The foregoing argument has shown that traditional Baptist thinking has evidenced ideological submission to the vested interests of the white population. Although Baptists often claim to adopt an a-political stance, when driven to comment, their views and actions reveal a very definite political stance in favour of the status quo. This fact is clearly illustrated in a letter written by Rev William Davies :

> I am perfectly unconnected with politics. From first to last I have kept myself in the shades. In public I have said nothing - I have written nothing - and I have done nothing. And what I have now written, I have written simply and alone for the sake of Truth and Righteousness; hoping that it will in some small degree rectify the mistakes into which our friends at home have been led respecting the character of their industrious and hard-working brethren in this colony.(91)

To sum up, the Baptists, being a small and relatively uninfluential group, were not so closely involved in colonial decision-making as were the Anglicans and Methodists; nevertheless they were part of the process of white expropriation of Xhosa land. Certainly, they did not oppose colonial decisions nor did they espouse the cause of the Xhosa people. These decisions are particularly striking when compared to their own experience of discrimination and persecution in both England and Germany. The choice with which they were confronted was either to accept the land given to them by the British government or to refuse to settle there on the grounds that it was Xhosa land. Now, bearing in mind that they were ignorant, new arrivals who had nowhere else to go, and that they lived alongside others who perceived no problem with the settlement of this land, it is doubtful that they even asked this question. However, once they had accepted the white, settler ideology and its consequent rejection of the views or rights of the Xhosa, their decision, albeit unconscious, had profound consequences. Henceforth

---

90. Hans-Werner Gensichen, "Mission and Ideology in South Africa" Miss 16:2 (1988) p 88. Otto Maduro speaks of "epistemological vigilance" in Religion and Social Conflicts (Maryknoll : Orbis, 1982) p 27.

91. Quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 88.

the Baptist settlers were to be identified with British colonialism, militarism and racism.

C. THE EFFECTS OF PRIVATIZATION, EURO-CENTRISM AND COLONIALISM ON THE 19TH CENTURY BAPTIST WITNESS.

It is argued above that the Baptist settlers arrived with a largely privatised and Euro-centric conception of their faith. By their conformity to colonialism, their religious faith was further encapsulated within the confines of white self-interest. This had a profound effect on 19th century South African Baptist theology, congregational activities, ecclesiastical structures and mission.

1. Effects on Baptist theology, congregational activities and ecclesiastical structures.

The privatised tendencies of South African Baptist theology are evidenced in the many church constitutions, sermons and letters dating from this period. For example, in the constitution of the new Ebenezer church (Grahamstown), evangelism is specifically mentioned as are "leading quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty"; rejecting "all State support and external control"; "bearing one another's burdens"; baptism; and the "teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit".(92) When the Alice Baptist church was constituted, Rev R H Brotherton said :

> We would give ourselves to each other in the fellowship of God's Son for religious exercises, the support of the "ministry of the Word" for the due observance of the Ordinances of the Gospel, the remembrance of the poor, mutual edification and for the conversion of the world.(93)

The founding of the Cape Town Baptist church was accompanied by the signing of a covenant which stressed the authority of the Bible and doctrines such as the fall and redemption. It defined members of the church as all those who "trust alone to Christ for salvation". But, for the purposes of this thesis, it is the section dealing with the <u>task</u> (or mission) of the church that is the most revealing :

> We shall endeavour to the utmost of our ability to further the cause of God amongst us by fervent prayer, diligent attendance

---

92. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 94-95.

93. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 123.

> on the means of Grace, pecuniary assistance in support of the Ministry, and by trying to get others to attend the house of God.[94]

In none of the above examples does anything much beyond church growth and evangelism make its appearance and, in the latter example, even philanthropy towards the poor has been omitted.

These dualistic, spiritualising and individualistic tendencies were not restricted to the English-speaking Baptist churches in South Africa; a similar pattern emerges within the German Baptist churches. (Indeed this was the pattern amongst all the settler churches).[95] During the first four weeks of Carl Hugo Gutsche's ministry in 1868, the issues with which he had to deal included :

> Cashbooks, official name of the church, official stamp and seal, building sites and building plans, day schools and church choirs, drunkenness, fishing on Sundays, perjury, dancing and courtcases."[96]

Other matters "frowned upon" were insolvency, playing cards, marrying non-Baptists and smoking after church services. The only issues of a broader social nature mentioned in the extensive list given in Schwär and Pape concerning the German Baptists were whether or not a Christian may join the army, police and railways and sell red ochre.[97] Nearly thirty years later, when Gutsche's son, Dr H Gutsche, arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1894, he saw the following as his three primary goals : instruction in the German language and "groundwork of religion"; the establishment of a German school; and special courses for candidates for baptism.[98] These, then, formed the pattern of Baptist worship and theological praxis. There is a notable absence of evidence that would indicate that these Baptists were concerned with the wider implications of their Christian witness.

Amongst the leaders of the English Baptist churches there were individuals, such as G W Cross and H J Batts, who exhibited wider social concerns. These were, however, expressed within the Colonial framework and

---

94. Quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 128.

95. See the religious sentiments expressed in Memorials of the British Settlers of South Africa (a record of the 1844 celebrations in Albany).

96. F H Haus, The German Baptist Churches of South Africa, p 8.

97. Schwär and Pape, Germans in Kaffraria : 1858-1958 (King William's Town, c1958), p 73.

98. 75 years : German Baptist Church of East London, pp 61-62.

centred on settler interests and experience.[99] Cross, for example, was concerned about issues such as farming and education.[100] Both he and Batts were drawn into the political turmoil of the South African War and its aftermath.[101] Generally, however, Baptists refrained from social comment. Inevitably, these attempts to withdraw from the social and economic realities of their day were unsuccessful. By virtue of the fact that they were occupying conquered territory and existing in a situation of conflict with the independent black tribes to the east of the Zuurveld, withdrawal was impossible. Identification with the interests of the settlers was, thus, both tempting and inevitable. Thus, when Baptists were driven by circumstances to state their views or take sides, they opted to support the interests of the colonial authorities and the settlers. This belies Baptists' assertions that they "only preach the Gospel and are not involved in politics".

When the Baptist Union was established in 1877, the doctrines and aims of the white churches, their privatised religious concerns, and their lack of social self-awareness were entrenched in its Constitution.[102] When reflecting on the aims of the Baptist Union, one of its founding members, the Rev G W Cross, mentioned what he regarded as three essential aspects of Baptist witness : "To reach those of our own faith and practice"; to be called "to larger activities in the cause of the truth for whose witness alone our church lives"; and to co-operate with other free churches "in the noble task of evangelism".[103] Similarly, in a letter written to the scattered churches by the new President of the Baptist Union, Rev W Stokes, these aims are repeated, namely the establishment of new churches and evangelism. In particular, the charge that he directed to the churches

---

99. When the interests of the colonists and the British government clashed, 19th century English political views concerning a Free Press and political representation were drawn upon (Davenport, op cit, p 77.) But later, whites used their power to deprive blacks of economic and political rights.

100. K E Cross, Ours is the Frontier (Pretoria : UNISA, 1986) pp 61-67.

101. Cross, ibid, pp 85-105 and Cuthberson, H J Batts (SA Baptist Historical Society, 1977) pp 11-15.

102. See Hudson-Reed, Together, p 50 and Enclosure 2 in the Appendix of this thesis.

103. Quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 136-137.

reveals the spiritual individualism and pietism of 19th century Baptist witness :

> ... let me urge upon you to be earnest and faithful in serving the Lord... There is much to be done. The enemy is busy, sinners are careless, error is rampant, and souls are perishing.[104]

But why did the Baptists propagate such a limited vision of the church's task? As already indicated, they were initially engaged in a struggle for survival. Thereafter, they were concerned to protect their hard-earned prosperity. A class and economic analysis of the German and English Baptists reveals the following. These settlers were drawn mainly from the poorer farming and artisan classes. A contemporary writer, Thomas Pringle, noted this concerning the class composition of the 1820 settlers :

> I should say that probably a third part were persons of real respectability of character, and possessed some worldly substance; but that the remaining two thirds were for the most part composed of persons of very unpromising description - persons who had hung loose on society - low in morals or desperate in circumstances.[105]

As a group, then, the Baptists who arrived in South Africa were poor, though some had hopes of "making themselves gentlemen" by owning 100 acres as opposed to the 3 acres they could expect in England.[106] The Germans, too, were initially so poor that they resorted to growing potatoes in order to pay their tithes and purchase Sunday School books from Oncken in Germany.[107]

But this situation soon began to change. By 1823 John Miller, the brother of William Miller, was the owner of a great deal of property and donated a section of land for the building of the St Batholomew chapel in Grahamstown.[108] By 1843, a mere twenty-three years after their arrival, a new Baptist chapel was built in Grahamstown at a cost of £1,900. By 1882, the new pastor's salary was raised, the members decided to build new school

---

104. Quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 142. See also Batts' description of the ministry of Thomas Chapman in Pietermaritzburg ibid, p 58.

105. T Pringle, "Narrative of a Residence in South Africa", pp 12-13, quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 53. The German settlers, too, were "from the lower strata of society", ibid, p 103.

106. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 7 & 25.

107. Haus, Carsten Langhein, p 6 and Schwär and Pape, op cit, p 73.

108. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 64.

rooms and a church keeper's house, and the church was assessed as being in a "prosperous condition".[109] Further, one of the founding members of the Baptist cause in South Africa, James Temlett, had by the time of his death in 1862 "amassed a considerable fortune".[110]

In the course of 77 years, the German Baptists managed to move beyond poverty and build 17 churches (of which 4 were replacements) and all of which were opened free of debt. They obtained and developed farms, and formed a large and relatively prosperous community in the Berlin, Stutterheim and Keiskamma regions. By the beginning of the 20th century the German Baptist pastor, the Rev P Rode, said that a number of members had left the mother church in East London :

> These people formed a new congregation in another part of town, and as there was among them a number of wealthy members, they built themselves an attractive little church."[111]

On the positive side, these Baptist pioneers did establish the Baptist church in this country. They built a great many churches and made the extension of the Baptist tradition possible. But there is also a negative side to their history, that of their complicity with the Colonial dispossession of the Xhosa, which is stressed in this chapter precisely because the traditional approach to Baptist historiography in South Africa entirely omits it.

Along with their fellow settlers, the Baptists were able to prosper and, as a group, attain middle-class security and respectability. Whereas in Britain and Germany, they had been a persecuted minority who had lived in straitened circumstances, in South Africa, they were socially mobile. Inevitably, they looked down upon the group that was, in terms of both class and race, less important than themselves. The myth of black inferiority was nurtured by the fact that all those blacks who did live in the colony were servants. The settlers were largely ignorant of the government, customs and economic structure of those blacks who lived across the border.

It can be seen, therefore, that the Baptist settlers did indeed benefit substantially from the colonial system which gave them land and the opportunity to make economic progress at the expense of the indigenous population. Group interest, ignorance, and the ongoing theological input from a certain type of evangelicalism, led to the perpetuation of a

---

109. One and a Half Centuries of Grahamstown Baptist Witness, pp 6 and 12. By 1822 the properties were valued at £5714, p 17.

110. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 77.

111. 75 Years : German Baptist Church of East London, p 65.

comfortable, middle-class, individualistic spirituality. Unless this negative dimension of our history is honestly faced, we South African Baptists will never be true to God, each other or our theological heritage.

2. The effect on Baptist Mission.

Mission and evangelism were regarded as synonymous by the 19th century South Africa Baptists and all their initial efforts were directed to their fellow settlers.[112] Thus, when the Baptist Union was formed in 1877, the stated aims of this organization made little, if any, reference to blacks, the context of mission, or an understanding of mission that went beyond evangelism.[113] Even when the BMS sent Rev Davies to South Africa, he ministered amongst whites at the Grahamstown church.[114]

It is noteworthy that, initially, the settlers did exhibit an interest in the Xhosa-speaking people. Hudson-Reed comments concerning the "intense missionary interest" of the early Baptists and quotes a letter written from Salem during the early 1820's :

> We have not been able as we fondly anticipated we should, to point those poor heathens, who are perishing through lack of knowledge, to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, but we trust a way will ere long be opened, whereby we may, vile and unworthy as we are, be made the instruments of contributing in some small measure to the salvation of immortal souls.[115]

A few years later, in 1826, this was written in the (London) Baptist magazine:

> There are vast tribes of the Caffres, not more than two days ride from this; they are a fine race of man and have very superior mental qualifications; a mission to them after arriving here would be attended with very little expense; at the same time one or two would be very useful among our countrymen.[116]

---

112. The first Baptist mission was the establishment of a preaching station at Kariega, see Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 81.

113. Cf Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 135-144.

114. Hudson-Reed, Together, pp 13-14. This was also true of the Rev Hay, cf Batts, op cit, pp 11-12 and 21.

115. Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 148.

116. Baptist Magazine Vol 18 (1826) p 188, quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 70 & 149. Presumably the last phrase refers to the desire of the settlers to employ the Xhosas as labourers.

Commenting on this quotation, Hudson-Reed says :

> This reflects the keen missionary attitude which was prevalent in Grahamstown amongst members of all denominations. The settlers were not yet possessed of great numbers of cattle nor had the spasmodic deprivations erupted into the holocaust of the succession of Xhosa wars.(117)

In the light of what has already been said concerning the development of the settler ideology, this is a very significant statement. It means that once the economic interests of the settlers were threatened by the conflict over land occupation, their attitude to mission changed.

Amongst the English-speaking Baptists the lack of active involvement in mission work was so marked that a visiting minister, Rev Levi Nuttall wrote to The Baptist in 1876 :

> It is quite time that our denomination should attempt to do its fair share of Christian work in that part of the world where so many of our people have taken up their abode. Very little if anything has been done for South Africa by the Baptist denomination at home, either for the natives or the many thousands of English colonists there. Not a single missionary is sent out by our Society to that immense field.(118)

Why were the South African and English Baptists not more involved? Several reasons have been advanced by leading Baptists. One reason given by Batts is the small number of Baptists within the country and their relative lack of wealth.(119) Other reasons were the lack of support for the Baptist cause by those "at home" and the Baptist principle of congregational government which militated against a joint effort. Further, the ongoing arguments within congregations over 18th century theological disputes resulted in an inward-looking denomination.

In addition, commentators refer to the agreement made in England between the LMS and the BMS.(120) The terms of the agreement were that the LMS would concentrate on Southern Africa whilst the BMS would work North of the Limpopo. As a result, missionaries who were active in the crucial Eastern Cape region were not Baptists. At the end of the day, there were no English-speaking Baptists working amongst the Xhosa because the settlers

---

117. Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 70.

118. The Baptist, March 10, 1876, quoted by Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 151.

119. Batts, op cit, p 130.

120. Cf Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 151 and Batts, ibid, pp 133-134.

were more concerned with their own churches, farms and businesses. These concerns, together with their adherence to the settler ideology discussed earlier, were the reason for their lack of evangelistic involvement. It was only after the power of the Xhosa had been broken (as a result of the many frontier wars, the loss of their land and the aftermath of the cattle-killing of 1856-7) that the English-speaking Baptists began to speak seriously about evangelizing the "natives". Significantly, though, these factors are seldom mentioned, let alone emphasised, by the 20th century Baptist commentators.

It was the German Baptists who first attempted mission work amongst the Xhosa. They established a missionary committee in 1868 and founded the Tschabo Mission Station in 1870.[121] Soon thereafter a Ms Harding was appointed as a teacher at the Tschabo school where black and white pupils were taught together. In 1874 Carl Pape, who had learnt to speak Xhosa and had experienced a call to mission work in a vision, was appointed as an evangelist amongst the Mfengu (Fingo) people living in the vicinity of King William's Town and Berlin by the German Baptists. Haus reports that after six years of witness Pape baptized only three Fingo women and that the intermittent frontier wars made the work very difficult :

> The school at Tschabo is closed, the Government plans to settle all Kaffirs across the Kei river. More often than not I had to carry a gun for my own protection during the preaching tours. Sometimes there were only one or two souls listening. However, last week the wife of the local chief got soundly converted, whereupon the chief called his local Council together to complain and forbid his wives to listen to the white mission preacher. However, the Council advised to let the women do as they liked at this particular crisis time. This made the women so glad, that two of his wives got converted.[122]

This long quotation provides a fascinating insight into Pape's mission efforts. It confirms the lack of interest on the part of the Xhosa audience, the conflict-ridden nature of the period and the resistance of chieftains to the conversion of their people. Clearly, the loss of land by the Xhosa and the suffering they had experienced over several decades of wars at the hand of white settlers and soldiers caused them to treat the preaching of a Gospel of "love" by these self-same whites with extreme suspicion. Pape continued in this post for five years until he had to resign and return to farming in

---

121. Cf Hudson-Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", pp 113-114 and Haus, op cit, p 14.

122. Haus, ibid, p 24. Akers, op cit, p 18 claims that within a few years Pape baptized 76 people but does not indicate the source of his information.

an effort to support his 18 children. He did, however, continue to do voluntary work after his resignation.[123]

It was only at the 1892 Assembly (the centenary of the English BMS), that Baptists resolved to do something for the "tens of thousands of natives round about us". Up to this date, says Batts, "South Africa was not looked upon as a field for native work by the Baptists".[124] Once the decision had been taken to proceed with "mission" work, several practical difficulties presented themselves. Batts says :

> It was difficult to get properly to work, as we had no native linguists amongst our ministers, and there were no native Baptist students preparing for the ministry.[125]

This was the situation after 72 years of Baptist witness in South Africa. Evidence, once again, of the fact that the interests of white Baptists lay elsewhere.

When missionary work eventually did get under way, it was not white South Africans who presented themselves for mission work during this period. Tschabo and other efforts were maintained because of the unsolicited arrival of Baptist missionaries from Australia, namely Ms Bellin, Ms Box and Mr Joyce, followed by Mr Pearce.[126] But again, as with the efforts of the German Baptists, few fruits were to be seen as a result of their labours :

> Mr Joyce, after many years in Pondoland, during which great progress was made and buildings erected, though years elapsed before there was a single convert, was removed in 1916 to the Transvaal to take charge of the Mission there.[127]

This raises the question of why the Baptist missionary efforts met with so little success. Several reasons can be advanced. One was the fact that the white missionaries paid so little attention to the context of their missionary work. The hatred engendered in the Xhosa by the frontier wars, their loss of land and the whites' deprecation of traditional Xhosa life was not acknowledged. These attitudes were reflected in a letter written by the Methodist Rev William Shaw which, like that of Davies, admits "instances of

---

123. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 114.

124. Batts, op cit, pp 133-134.

125. Batts, ibid, p 135.

126. Cf Batts, ibid, pp 137-139.

127. Batts, ibid, 143. The mission work of other groups also only met with little success amongst displaced groups such as the Mfengu and after the annexation of the Transkei; see Cuthbertson, op cit, pp 18 ff.

flagrant injustice exercised by individual Settlers towards Caffres" but defends the settlers as a group. Shaw also speaks of the many benevolent institutions established by the missionaries for "the propagation of the Gospel and the general improvement of the native tribes".[128] Significantly, Shaw makes no mention of the fact that the Xhosas, if they were in need of this benevolence, were in need of it because they had been deprived of their land. Nor does he mention the great suspicion with which these very missionaries were viewed by Xhosa leaders.

Another factor was the effect of the successive frontier wars on the attitudes of the settlers. For example, this was the effect of the 1877/78 war :

> This new outburst of violence firmly drove a wedge between the Xhosa and the German settlers. The effects of that wedge are still felt today. As a result of that war the people's attitudes changed. They no longer gave as generously as at first nor were they as interested in sharing the Gospel with the Xhosa people.[129]

Without being overly cynical, it would seem that whilst the Xhosas were passive, the Baptists were willing to support missionary work, but when the Xhosas struck back in an attempt to stop the encroaching land-hungry settlers, the whites lost interest in mission work. This is borne out by Pape's plea for increased efforts and personnel :

> We must do more for the Natives, we need a full-time worker living amongst the Blacks. We have enough young men, but they lack the enthusiasm and compassion to win black souls for the Lord Jesus.[130]

In 1888 the German churches requested that the Baptist Union take over the work at Tschabo. This was later agreed to and John Adams, who had been educated at Lovedale, assumed the post previously held by Pape.[131] By 1892, when he reported on the work at the Assembly, the first black person ever to do so, he was still an "evangelist" rather than an officially recognised pastor or missionary.

---

128. Hudson Reed, "Baptist Beginnings", p 85.

129. Akers, op cit, p 19.

130. Quoted by Haus, op cit, p 25. Attempts were made to obtain and train mission workers from Germany but, for various reasons, these efforts were unsuccessful, ibid.

131. Batts, op cit, p 131 and Haus, op cit, pp 26-27.

A third factor in the lack of response to mission work was the active resistance of the Xhosa people. The Xhosas were well aware of the inconsistency between the words and actions of the missionaries. Chief Sandile said that the Wesleyan H Dugmore was :

> ... a man who came to teach the truth to Caffres : but he does not know the truth himself. Such men from the Colony speak lightly of war; they delight in the grass and water of Caffraria and make strings of lies to secure it.(132)

The Xhosa, rightly, refused to countenance the false separation between a religion of individual conversion and the looming threat of colonial occupation. Tiyo Soga, himself a committed Christian, reported how chief Sarhili and his people viewed the missionaries :

> The prevalent opinion of that tribe is, that missionaries are emissaries of the Government, to act upon the minds and feelings of the people, with an instrument which they call "the Word", and that those who become affected by the Word and exchange Kaffir customs for those of the white man become subjects of the English government.(133)

The chieftains were deeply disturbed by the work of the missionaries since many of those who had moved onto the mission stations had done so in order to escape the wrath or discipline of the chiefs and because of the social dislocation caused by the preaching of the missionaries.(134)

A final factor was the attitudes and methods adopted by the missionaries towards Xhosa culture. Many adopted a "Christ against culture" approach towards the Africans (but, significantly, not in relation to their own culture) :

> Consequently the missionary enterprise was primarily concerned with the transformation of institutions, customs and lifestyles that were alien or incompatible with Western standards.(135)

Thus many missionaries rejected the Xhosa rites of circumcision, lobola and polygamy as unchristian, insisted on Western dress and houses and drew their converts into mission stations. Furthermore, as Cuthbertson has shown,

> "Conversion" strategy centred on a concerted assault on values and the religious or spiritual sanction underlying them. So

---

132. Quoted by Peires, op cit, p 128.

133. Luke Pato, op cit, p 4, quoted from Jeff Opland, Poetry : Aspects of Black South African Tradition, p 197.

134. Peires, op cit, p 109.

135. Luke L Pato, op cit, p 1. See Richard Niebuhr's classic Christ and Culture (New York : Harper and Row, 1951).

> missionaries consciously confronted what they regarded as the "pagan" worship of spiritual forces, which destroyed the social cohesion of communities based on kinship relationships, with the peculiar individualism of Western Christianity. In sum, "conversion" meant a rejection of an African religious world-view and a denial of traditional social custom."[136]

Where did the Baptists stand in all of this? Clearly, they did not defend the rights or freedom of the "natives". They preached a Gospel of the soul's salvation while, as settlers, they trampled on the rights and land of the Xhosa. Furthermore, the Baptists, as has been indicated, saw the Xhosa as untrustworthy unbelievers and barbarians. Concerning Xhosa customs Batts said :

> "It is only a few years since Pondoland became annexed to the Cape Colony; before that all the vices of heathenism had full sway, smelling out, witchcraft, and the like rioted, unhindered by any law throughout the wide land, all of which were put to an end under Colonial rule."[137]

It is striking that Batts does not discuss the social function of these customs within traditional society, nor the negative effects of Colonial rule from the Xhosa point of view. This does not mean that Xhosa traditional culture should be romanticized. It certainly had its faults, but it also performed the vital social functions of cohesion and discipline. In addition, it is significant that Batts does not mention the alliance between Christianity and Western culture which issued in the injustice of Colonial (and thereby Baptist) politics, economics and cultural imperialism.

In short, the lack of Baptist missionary success was due to the above-mentioned collusion with colonialism and also because they considered their faith to be "culture-free". They preached a Gospel of the salvation of the soul that, on the one hand, took virtually no cognisance of the customs, economy and political structures of the Xhosa, whilst on the other hand it enforced adherence to Colonial customs, economics and political structures. Thus, they were both uncritical of their own theological-cultural heritage and unaware of that this ideological blindness was at the root of their inability to preach the Gospel effectively to the indigenous African people. Inasmuch as the Baptist settlers were both willingly part of the colonial process and failed to be critical of it on theological and ethical grounds, they contributed to the destruction of the traditional way of life of the

---

136. Greg Cuthbertson, "The English speaking churches and Colonialism", op cit, pp 16-17.

137. Batts, op cit, p 145.

indigenous tribes. Tragically, the privatised Gospel that they preached offered no solution to the psychological and social havoc wrought by the actions of the settlers.

As is shown in chapters six and seven, even though the Baptists were part of the Colonial dispossession of tribal land, it does not appear that the implications of this - for both their Christian faith and their missionary efforts amongst the Africans - have been thoroughly grasped. It is this fact, more than any other that was, and is, at the basis of black resistance to Christian mission.

In conclusion, then, it has been argued in this chapter that the South African Baptist settlers retained their European cultural perceptions and their Euro-centric theology. Not unexpectedly, they reflected the perceptions and prejudices of their time. This combination of their quietist theology and their settler interests led to a type of theological praxis that conformed with the colonial mentality of white domination and black subjugation.

It is also shown in this chapter that, whereas the settlers tended to give the impression that they were the injured party, the fact of the matter is that a clash was inevitable from the moment that the settlers arrived on the Eastern Cape frontier. This clash was not simply the confrontation of two land-hungry groups moving into an unoccupied area : the whites were very definitely encroaching on land previously occupied by the Xhosa. Further, the Baptists were caught up in, and collaborated with, the Colonial advance which resulted in the political power, customs and economic well-being of the Xhosa being virtually destroyed.

The immediate theological background of the Baptist settlers was largely a privatised one; the settlers were apparently ignorant of the social dimensions of their rich theological heritage. These factors, together with their collusion with the colonial policies, precluded the development of a prophetic theology. Whilst the settlers may have been concerned with their own rights, they evidenced little or no interest in the rights of the dispossessed Xhosa. In the nature of the case, linked as the Baptists (and other denominations) were with British imperialism and settler interests, their ideological commitments further prevented the development of a genuine concern for the culture, traditions and rights of the "pagan, barbarous natives". The memory of their denomination's own long socio-political exclusion and the relatively recent resurgence of social consciousness was

seemingly suppressed beneath the attempt to survive in what they experienced as a new and hostile land.

Consequently, the preaching, congregational activities and ecclesiastical structures of the 19th century Baptist churches reflected the limited concerns of its white members. South African Baptists also exhibited little inclination to be active in the type of mission work actually required; that is a holistic effort that did not simply "spiritualise" the Gospel, but related it to the spiritual, psychological and social needs of the black people of Southern Africa.

In effect, then, the Baptists beginnings in the Eastern Cape were closely associated with the interests of the Colonial government on the one hand and the economic interests of the settlers on the other hand. But, because the Baptists were unaware of their own ideological commitments and had privatised the Christian faith, they had no measure of censure for the white community and no message of hope for the black community.

It is perhaps too much to expect the Baptists to have abandoned their own interests in support for the Xhosa. This small, somewhat beleaguered group did not have the insight or capacity to be radically different. It is easy to judge them on the basis of hindsight. What is far more difficult is for modern Baptists to exorcise, from within themselves and their theological praxis, the later effects of their 19th century beginnings. The tragedy is that, even today, white South African Baptists still adhere to essentially the same ideological framework as that of their 19th century settler forebears. Thus, the 19th century settler presuppositions and patterns of behaviour are important precisely because they persist within the denomination. The consequences of the 20th century perpetuation of this paradigm are the subject of the next chapter.

****

CHAPTER 6

THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS BETWEEN 1892-1977 : SOCIAL CONFORMITY, SEGREGATION AND WHITE DOMINATION.

For much of the 20th century, the privatised theology of the Baptist Union determined the responses of Baptists to their social context.[1] Equally, the Baptists' social context reinforced their acceptance of ideological constructs such as segregation and white domination as well as their continued adherence to a privatized theology. In turn, BU ecclesiastical structures and mission work were detrimentally influenced by both white ideological captivity and theological privatization. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to reveal this socio-theological interrelationship by analysing, firstly, the response of the South African Baptists to their social context and showing that the reasons for this response are rooted in their privatised theology and education. Secondly, this chapter seeks to analyse the influence of the Baptists' context and their privatised theology on their denominational structures and mission work.

With respect to the South African Baptists' 20th century response to their social context, it is argued here that they conformed to the ideologies of white "trusteeship", segregation and Apartheid. Between the years 1892 (the establishment of the SABMS) and 1977 (the Centenary celebrations of the BU), the predominant social response of Baptist churches (both black and white, albeit for different reasons) was that of conformism. Although the Baptists did often address critical resolutions to the government concerning both government policies and their implementation, they did not initiate a concerted or united resistance to the State. Towards those in power they were, therefore, socially ineffective. By largely conforming to the social structures and dominant ideologies around them, the Baptists were unable (or unwilling) to present a vital and effective critique of white power or to empower the blacks within their ranks.

Previous chapters have shown that the roots of privatization lie deep within aspects of the Baptist tradition. These chapters have also shown that the privatised elements within the Baptist tradition are neither compatible

---

1. For the sake of convenience, the Baptist Union will be referred to as the BU in this and the next two chapters.

with the totality of the Christian Gospel nor reflective of the entire Baptist tradition. Nevertheless, this privatised understanding of the Christian faith was perpetuated - with dire consequences both for the Baptist denomination itself and for the interrelationship between the South African Baptists and the society within which they lived.

A. THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS' RESPONSE TO THEIR SOCIO-HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTEXT BETWEEN 1892-1977.

Historically, at least four periods are discernable between 1892-1977, namely : 1892-1910; 1911-1947; 1948-1959; and 1960-1977. Each of these will be discussed in turn to highlight the central socio-political and economic issues to which the churches (including the Baptist churches) were compelled to respond, even if all they did was acquiesce by default.

1. 1892-1910.

Between the establishment of the SABMS (1892) and the political Union of South Africa (1910), the deep-rooted resentment between the English and Afrikaners (dating back at least as far as the British occupation of 1806) erupted into the South African War of 1899-1902.[2] Even after the cessation of military activity this enmity was not eliminated. The Baptists, along with all the other denominations, found themselves caught up in the throes of this confrontation between the British and the Boers. One of the long-term effects of this war was that for the remainder of the 20th century Afrikaners were suspicious of all things English, including the social pronouncements of the English-speaking churches. Since they had both English and Afrikaans speaking members in their churches, the Baptists' unity was constantly threatened. This resulted in political conservatism and a proclivity towards "balance" that caused their pronouncements (to the State and their own members) to be generally vague and non-directional.[3]

This dissension between the English and the Afrikaners should not, however, be stressed to the exclusion of another central dynamic, that is, the conflict between the white and black inhabitants of South Africa. Military conquest and black dispossession of land had already destroyed

---

2. See G Cuthbertson, "The Nonconformist Conscience and the South African War 1899-1902" (UNISA : PhD, 1986), especially pp 13ff.

3. See Ellis André, op cit, pp 38 & 85 ff.

African power. But worse was to come. According to the terms of the 1910 Union of South Africa, Africans, "Coloureds" and Indians were accorded no rights of franchise other than the qualified franchise that was, temporarily, permitted to remain in effect in the Cape and Natal. By consenting to this Act, the British government abandoned the blacks of South Africa and left them completely vulnerable to white settler fears and self-interest.[4]

On the economic front also, vital developments took place. Although the gold rush had commenced in 1886, the gold mining industry consolidated its position during the early part of the 20th century. Whereas the mining of diamonds around Kimberley (during the early stages) and the alluvial gold mining in the Pilgrim's Rest area could be carried out by individual prospectors, deep-level rock mining was quite another matter. In addition to labour, it required expertise, machinery and capital. This led inevitably to industrialization, urbanization and the establishment of a capitalist economy.[5] The whites, having already conquered the land, now took control of the mining and incipient manufacturing industries. Further, they compelled Africans to enter the labour market by means of Hut and Poll taxes, and they decided what wages were to be paid and who should receive skilled work (eg the 1911 Mines and Works Act). Consequently, African peasants became landless farm labourers, and the "native reserves" became what they still are today, peripheral labour reserves for the white, urban economy. The immediate and long-term effects of these developments were enormous, for this racial and social stratification,

> ...provided a firm foundation for the eventual emergence of the Apartheid system. Shaped by these forces, the church would be trapped in a socio-economic system which <u>contradicted its own theological identity</u>.[6]

The BU responded to these events by stating their objections to the "flogging of Natives", the proposed legislation to remove their right to own property, and the unjust treatment they received.[7] What the (white) Baptists did <u>not</u> do was to draw upon their radical socio-theological heritage and align

---

4. J W de Gruchy, <u>The Church Struggle in South Africa</u>, p 27, Also Davenport's discussion on the effects of the Langden Report of 1905, <u>South Africa : A Modern History</u>, p 152.

5. C Villa-Vicencio, <u>Trapped in Apartheid</u>, p 65 ff and J Cochrane, <u>Servants of Power</u>, pp 55-125.

6. C Villa-Vicencio, <u>ibid</u>, p 66 (my emphasis).

7. See J James, "A Century of Witness against racial discrimination and social injustice", p 3.

themselves with emerging black political protest. For example, they did not support either the aims or methods of the 1906 Bambata rebellion. In addition, although the leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) were virtually all mission-educated and members of the various Christian churches, they held no positions of influence in these churches. Consequently, the Baptists (together with the other churches) found themselves caught between the politicians and mining magnates on the one hand, and the disenfranchised and dispossessed Africans on the other.

2. 1911-1947.

This second period was characterised by the consolidation of white power over the land, the economy, and the political realm. Through legislation such as the Land Act of 1913, and the Labour Acts (eg of 1911 and 1924), whites ensured that Africans were excluded from the areas of power. As Dube noted in relation to the Land Act :

> it is evident that the aim of this law is to compel service by taking away the means of independence and self-improvement.[8]

Indeed, the significance of the Land Act for the future of Africans was not lost on either the Africans themselves nor on the Christian churches.[9]

During the 1930's, the BU responded vigorously to the increasingly oppressive labour laws. Concerning job reservation, they said :

> That this Assembly of Baptists, who have stood all through their history for civil and religious liberty and equity, expresses its strong indignation at the Government's apparent policy of repression towards the Native Peoples..."[10]

Further, they spoke of employment restrictions as a policy "of selfishness and fear on the part of the white races..."[11] They spoke out against the Poll Tax on "natives" and called upon the government to provide education for blacks, abolish the Poll Tax, and improve the black standard of living.[12]

But why did the BU, despite their criticisms of government policy, later go on to perpetuate white domination within their own structures? Part

---

8. Quoted in (eds) T Karis and G Carter, From Protest to Challenge Vol 1 (Stanford : Hoover Institution Press, 1972) p 85.

9. See de Gruchy, op cit, p 37 and Cochrane, op cit, pp 102 ff.

10. SABH 1932-33, p 32.

11. SABH 1933-34, p 27.

12. SABH 1934-35, p 37 and SABH 1941-42, p 63.

of this answer lies in the fact that their deepest ideological commitments remained unchallenged either by the other South African churches or by blacks within their own mission society. Thus, they remained tied to the belief that to reach an equitable settlement to the "Native Problem" the following must be recognised :

> ... the full recognition of the universal Creatorship of GOD and the consequent brotherhood of man, involving the moral responsibility of the more favoured races for the upliftment of those in more backward stages of development.(13)

However much the BU may have opposed biological Darwinism, this statement evidences their belief in social Darwinism. Not only did they accept the ideology of "white trusteeship"; they were also suspicious of black resistance movements of any kind. They viewed black political movements as hindrances to mission work. Baptist missionaries reported : "... we have suffered at all times and in all parts of our field from political-religious movements amongst the Bantu people."(14)

3. 1948-1959.

In 1948 the Nationalist Party came to power and, although a form of Apartheid already existed, it was henceforth to be legally entrenched and ruthlessly enforced. During the years that followed, all black hopes of obtaining justice at the hands of whites were brutally dashed. In a series of draconian laws including the Group Areas Act (1950), the Population Registration Act (1950) and the Bantu Education Act (1953), Africans, Whites, "Coloureds" and Indians were artificially and forcibly separated. Thousands of Africans launched protests such as the Defiance Campaign and the signing of the Freedom Charter (1955), the women's march on the Union buildings to protest against the Pass Laws (1956), and the Sharpeville Pass protest (1960). But the response of the Nationalist government was unreservedly oppressive, remorseless and violent. Thousands were repressed, imprisoned, exiled and killed.

As early as 1948, the Baptist Assembly responded by stating that it : "deeply regrets any aspects of the Government's policy which may involve social and economic injustice" for the black population.(15) Nevertheless,

---

13. SABH 1930-31, p 27.

14. SABH 1932-33, p 12.

15. SABH 1948-49, p 98. Like many other churches, the Baptists criticised both the government and blacks, see Villa-Vicencio, op cit, p 77.

white Baptists could not bring themselves into radical confrontation with the government, nor were they willing to side with their black members. This is revealed in their fourfold appeal to black Baptists after the Sharpeville debâcle : Firstly, that they rededicate themselves to Christ. Secondly, that they "... give no allegiance to men who advocate violence or racial hatred, and to refrain from any participation in subversive movements that militate against law and order." Thirdly, that they exercise "restraint under provocation" for Christ was "reviled but reviled not again" and, fourthly, that they reach out to the unconverted.[16] It is significant that no mention is made here of the government's abuse of its power, or the Baptist principle of civic liberty. Rather, black Baptists were encouraged to practice a servile form of religion, and Jesus' responses to the authorities of his day were misrepresented. In their inability to resist social evil and their unwillingness to support actively the civic rights of blacks, the Baptists exposed their conformity to the status quo.

Baptists also revealed their basic commitment to the separation of groups in their response to the Group Areas Act. The Baptist Assembly expressed its "grave concern regarding the likely effects" of the Act, but went on to say that should the Government go ahead, it should do so in a just way![17] Even though it was aware of the hardships ensuing from the implementation of the Group Areas Act, the BU did not call for its abolition; rather, it requested the government to "exercise charity and patience" in applying it.[18] Questions abound : How could an Act that was essentially unjust be charitably enforced? How could the Assembly persist with these calls to the government in the face of all the evidence that the Act was evil in its intention and oppressive in its application? Possibly because the white Baptist decision-makers were not directly affected, because Baptist structures were already segregated and because white Baptists shared many of the government's preconceptions concerning the African people. It was during this very period that Baptists stated that they did not support "complete cohesion" because of "the great divergence in education, habits and culture" of the South African population.[19]

---

16. SABH 1960-61, pp 1, 5-7.

17. SABH 1953-54, p 110.

18. SABH 1956-57, p 120.

19. SABH 1956-57, p 119.

Even when many "Coloured", Indian and African Baptists lost their homes and churches because of Apartheid legislation, no resistance was offered, and the long-standing interconnection between civic and religious liberty was forgotten.[20] Despite the ominous implications of the Group Areas Act for the future of the denomination, Baptists did not regard this Act as a matter of "religious" principle. The 1957 Native Laws Amendment Bill, however, simply because it directly touched on church attendance, was fiercely resisted by virtually all the churches, who threatened civil disobedience and caused the government to withdraw the Bill. Concerning this Bill, the Baptists said that "... we cannot agree that access to worship should depend on the permission of any State authority."[21] But the Group Areas Act, which had much more far-reaching effects on worship, church unity and Christian fellowship (even in the narrow terms in which Baptists perceived them) was permitted to pass onto the statute books with little more than a whimper issuing from the churches. Similarly, Baptists did not protest against forced removals, but merely sought to ameliorate their effects.[22]

One final example of the Baptists' socio-political perceptions during this period can be cited, namely their reaction to the Bantu Education Act, according to which "non-Europeans" would receive an education which would do no more than prepare them for a subordinate position in society. In its initial response, the Assembly protested that the Act "reflects neither the attitude of just trusteeship nor the spirit of Christ's teaching."[23] But they did not oppose the government's take-over of church schools : a comment made at the time says no more than that Baptist staff would now be freed to "devote more time to the spiritual side of our work".[24] This reaction shows a failure to grasp the appalling consequences of this educational policy for the future of black South Africans, as well as a dualism which

---

20. See, for example, SABH 1957-58, p 62; SABH 1965-66, p 65, 97; SABH 1970-71, pp 88 and 146.

21. Cf SABH 1957-58, p 56 and SA Baptist, May 1957, p 5.

22. The BU was concerned about the effect on evangelism (SABH 1968-69, p 97 and 116) and the government was called upon to provide for the resettled people (SABH 1971-72, p 179).

23. SABH 1949-50, p 125.

24. SABH 1954-55, p 44.

neatly separated the educational and spiritual needs of young blacks.[25] Although Baptists were aware of the political and racial problems within the country, the primary solution proposed by its leaders was a call to the churches to :

> give themselves to fervent prayer and personal effort towards the deepening of spiritual life and practical Christian living...and above all pray for REVIVAL...[26]

This commitment to prayer and revival was conceived of in very circumscribed terms and was not accompanied by a consistent social theology. This was a form of spirituality that the Old Testament prophets, for example, would not have recognised (nor would many of the English Baptists).

4. 1960-1977.

The earlier part of the fourth period (1960-1977) was relatively quiet. The events of Sharpeville had rocked the country, and black political protest was in temporary disarray following the imprisonment of key leaders such as Robert Sobukwe, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela. In addition, organisations such as the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) were banned and those leaders who had not already been imprisoned fled the country. But, by the late 1960's, under the inspired leadership of persons such as Steve Biko, the Black Consciousness movement began to make itself felt. It manifested itself through a number of different organizations as well as in the rise (during the early 1970s) of Black Theology. By 1976, the resistance against Apartheid had exploded, first in Soweto, and then throughout the country. It was against this background that the South African Baptist Union celebrated its centenary in 1977.

How did the SA churches respond to these developments? An immediate response was the controversial Cottesloe consultation which was held in December 1960. Another was the emergence of the journal Pro Veritate (1962). A year later, the Christian Institute (CI) was founded.[27] Subsequently, work on the SPROCAS (Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society)

---

25. When the government introduced separate universities for black students, Baptists made no protest but simply commented on the effects this would have on their evangelistic efforts, SABH 1959-60, p 77.

26. SABH 1956-57, p 118. See also SABH 1952-53, p 96.

27. See the Cottesloe Consultation 7-14 December, Johannesburg, p 74; de Gruchy, The Church Struggle, pp 62-68, 104-115; and (eds) J de Gruchy & C Villa-Vicencio, Apartheid is a Heresy (Cape Town : David Philip, 1983).

reports commenced and the Message to the People of South Africa was published in 1968 by the SACC. The Message stated, amongst other things, that Apartheid, was :

> A false faith, a novel gospel; it inevitably is in conflict with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which offers salvation, both individual and social, through faith in Christ alone.[28]

Towards the end of the 1960's, within certain English speaking churches there was a move away from liberalism to a more radical black critique.[29] As early as 1969, the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) had been initiated. This was followed in South Africa by an intense controversy concerning violence and non-violence, the role of the SADF, and the growing radicalization of the SACC.[30] Later events such as the 1976 Soweto revolt, the murder of Steve Biko in 1977, and the mass banning of black political organizations further intensified resistance to Apartheid. In all these events, the "prophetic" elements of the church were deeply involved, which brought the wrath of the government down upon them in the form of Commissions of Enquiry, arrests and death.[31]

What was the BU's response to all of this? A few examples will have to suffice. Baptists were uncomfortable with the direction that the CCSA and the WCC were taking,[32] and, at the 1969 Assembly, voted (151 for and 65 against) to relinquish membership of the SACC and retain only observer status.[33] In 1976 the BU withdrew its observer status (194 for and 48 against).[34]

---

28. See (eds) J W de Gruchy and W B de Villiers, The Message in Perspective (Johannesburg : SACC, 1968) pp 11-12.

29. Liberalism here means a cautious, verbal, individualist critique which hopes for the integration of blacks into white society without supporting a universal franchise or structural economic transformation.

30. See Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid, pp 109ff.

31. Concerning the Schlebusch, Le Grange and Steyn Commissions, see de Gruchy, op cit, pp 110-127 and (eds) Villa-Vicencio and de Gruchy, Resistance and Hope (Cape Town : David Philip, 1985) especially pp 112-125. See also the discussion in chapter 7.

32. See the very critical article on the WCC written by J James in SA Baptist (January 1962) pp 7-8.

33. SABH 1969-70, p 205.

34. See SABH 1976-77, p 192; SABH 1974-75, p 155 and André, op cit pp 94-96, 106-110, 138.

In relation to the Message, their point of departure was to define the Gospel in an essentially privatised way :

> The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls for a response by way of faith on the part of the individual in order that he may enter into the spiritual benefits of Christ's death and resurrection.(35)

Secondly, although they agreed that racism was wrong, they believed that the Message was theologically questionable because

> It confused man's eternal salvation with the salvation of political issues.(36)

They regarded the view of the Message that a person cannot be both a supporter of separate development and a committed Christian as "a false antithesis", because, they said,

> the views and attitudes of an individual in racial matters do not enter into the realm of his being justified by faith. They belong in the realm of Christian ethics.(37)

But why was there this huge separation between doctrine and ethics (or faith and practice) in the thinking of the South African Baptists? As already indicated, this was partly due to the dualisms inherent in their theology. But another reason must also be noted, namely, that some within the denomination supported the policy of Apartheid.(38) What was clearly missing in their analysis was a full awareness of what Apartheid implied for blacks in economic, political and social terms.(39) It was not simply that a good policy was being badly implemented; the policy was inherently unjust, and thereby un-Christian. Furthermore, they did not realise the implications of the fact that this policy, so clearly motivated by white self-interest, was underpinned by theological justifications. Despite the fact that the government which propagated Apartheid consisted of those who professed the Christian faith, key Baptists persisted in the belief that the primary task

---

35. Their response was outlined in the SABH 1968-69, p 192-194. See also The Message in Perspective, pp 34 ff. The Baptists' response was chillingly similar to that of B J Vorster; see de Gruchy, The Church Struggle, p 119.

36. de Gruchy, ibid, p 120.

37. SABH 1968-69, p 192-194. See also the editorial of the SA Baptist (November 1968) pp 12-13.

38. SABH 1968-69, p 193.

39. Though the "Coloured" Baptist Alliance expressed its "strong stand against separate development", SABH 1969-70, p 86.

of Christians was to convert individuals who would then, automatically, bring about social transformation.[40]

The Baptists did not support the University Christian Movement (UCM), and a critical report on the CI (and Beyers Naudé) was published in the SA Baptist.[41] At the 1970 Baptist Assembly it was emphasised that the Baptist Union was not a member of the WCC. The BU expressed:

> ... its strongest condemnation of grants made for any purpose by the World Council of Churches to movements whose declared aim is to overthrow the elected governments of Southern Africa by violent means. The Assembly also rejects the use of violence as a solution to racial problems.[42]

This statement shows that white Baptists had no difficulty in speaking of the white oligarchy that controlled South Africa as an "elected" government. They did not question their support of the violent means used by the SADF, nor did they ask why organizations such as SWAPO and the ANC had resorted to violent means in the first place. Likewise, when the SACC meeting at Hammanskraal in 1974 issued an appeal to churches to support conscientious objection and question the role of military chaplains, the BU entirely dissociated itself from Clause 2 of the Resolution "in which the profession of conscientious objection is advocated as a method of registering disapproval of the political and social status quo in South Africa."[43] It urged the government to review existing legislation to "improve race relations" but it reaffirmed its support for the chaplains of the Defence Force. Finally, whilst it affirmed that conscientious objection had "a legitimate place within the Christian tradition and in Baptist conviction," it made no calls upon its members to resist conscription.[44] But this, as Villa-Vicencio says (in connection with other English-speaking churches), was a form of moderation that amounted to "an abdication of political responsibility and to ethical indecision"; it also "lent direct support to the privatization of religion..."[45]

---

40. SABH 1969-70, p 198-199.

41. See SABH 1969-70, p 82 and the report written by J James in SA Baptist (Nov 1968) 16 ff.

42. SABH 1970-71, p 215.

43. SABH 1974-75, p 154.

44. SABH 1974-75, p 155.

45. Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid, p 112.

To sum up, the South African Baptists did address themselves to some of the socio-political and religious questions which arose during the period 1892-1977; but their response was ultimately ineffective. In the protests which they made from time to time, the Baptists resembled the other English speaking churches. But because their segregated structures more closely resembled those of the Afrikaans speaking churches, the views of black members were ignored; consequently their protests were not very outspoken. They did engage in limited criticism, but essentially they conformed to the status quo. Because of the privatised nature of their theology and the exclusion of black Baptists from participation in the Baptist Union's decision-making processes, they were unable to break free of the stranglehold of white self-interest. Despite their large black membership the Baptist Union was led by whites, who were not prepared to challenge the entire socio-economic and political structure of South African society.[46]

B. THE PRIVATISED THEOLOGY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS.

The South African Baptists' 19th century heritage of social conformity was perpetuated during the 20th century. White Baptists on occasions addressed social issues, but - consciously or unconsciously - they did so without threatening their own social interests. Moreover, socially concerned Baptists, whose influence can be detected in Assembly resolutions, were in the minority. For the majority of Baptists, responses to social issues, let alone active social protest, were not central to the task of the church; at best they were an optional extra.

Whereas the 19th century Baptists had identified with Colonialism, during the earlier part of the 20th century, Baptists imbibed the ideology of white superiority, euphemistically termed "white trusteeship". After 1948, though they often addressed critical resolutions to the government, they both preached and practised the segregation of black and white within their local congregations and national structures. Unlike their Anabaptist forebears, they regarded Christian unity as a distant spiritual ideal rather than a principle that required historical expression.

The analysis that follows notes the privatised theology of the BU as reflected in their ideological commitments, central congregational concerns, and annual Assemblies.

---

46. Villa-Vicencio, op cit, pp 71ff & 125-137.

1. Baptist ideological commitments.

As late as the 1930's, white Baptists were still thinking in terms of the settler paradigm outlined in the previous chapter. Immediately prior to the Assembly in Grahamstown, this comment appeared in the South African Baptist Missionary Report :

> Here in the Eastern Province began the frequent conflicts with the Bantu people for the possession of the land, involving ebb and flow of the opposing forces of civilization and barbarism before peace was at last secured.(47)

During the first half of the 20th century, the Baptists still identified with the notion of the British Empire. Baptist Handbooks contained many references to England as "home" or "the old country".(48)

Another important indication of white Baptist ideological commitments was that they were not comfortable with black aspirations. For example, in the preamble of the 1963-64 SABMS report, the growth of "subversive" activities and the clamours for liberty elsewhere in Africa were noted. The report went on to comment :

> [This] is likely to make Africans here, who might otherwise be fairly contented, to feel they <u>are</u> in a desperate plight.(49)

It would appear that white Baptist missionaries were out of touch with the feelings of black South Africans (in the post-Sharpeville period) concerning political developments in the country; indeed, they felt threatened by them.

A final, but vital, feature of the Baptists' paradigm was their commitment to the ideology of separation under white dominion. This aspect is discussed later in this chapter in connection with their theological education, denominational structures and missionary work.

2. The central concerns of the white Baptist churches.

For the entire period 1892-1977, the BU experienced a slow rate of numerical growth. A lack of response to evangelism and low growth percentages of 1-2% were reported in the 1940's and 1950's.(50) It was also stated that the Gospel was "falling on deaf ears" and that churches were

---

47. SABH 1931-32, p 10.

48. For example, see SABH 1908-9, pp 6 and 11. See also their messages to British monarchs : SABH 1937-38, p 18; SABH 1950-51, p 42; and SABH 1952-53, pp 29 and 85.

49. SABH 1964-65, p 64.

50. Eg SABH 1947-48, p 26-27 and SABH 1954-55, p 110.

declining spiritually.[51] The BU responded by re-emphasizing evangelism, starting "All Age Sunday Schools" and putting more emphasis on youth work.[52] In short, Baptists consistently devoted their attention to internal spiritual affairs, as is indicated year after year in the Association reports and In Memorial tributes published in the South African Baptist Handbooks (SABH).

Arguably, the reason for this state of affairs can be found in the Baptists' limited vision of the Gospel, spirituality and ministry. For example, despite their stress on congregational government, their leadership structures were dominated by their ministers. This fact was admitted : "in theory we are democratic but in practice church business is often run by a select few, by the deacons, or the pastor";[53] but little was done to remedy this situation. Later, this lack of involvement on the part of members made Baptist churches vulnerable to the energy of the Charismatic Movement. The Baptists' privatised conception of the Gospel restricted the scope of Christian activity to evangelism, prayer meetings, Sunday School and Sunday services. But mere church-going provided no real challenge for the energies of the members at large - and especially of those whose experience, concerns and gifts were being ignored. The Baptists concerned themselves with reporting on the erection of new churches, buildings and the movement of ministers.[54] But they did not reflect on what ministry involved in a context of intense political grievances, economic and education deprivation, poor housing and poverty. Contrary to the example of Jesus, Christian discipleship and ministry were largely confined to an individualistic spirituality, preaching and evangelism. The results were the preservation of white self-interest and the decline of spiritual growth.

This lack of vision was also reflected in the Baptists' attitudes towards bodies set up by their own members such as the Moral and Social Welfare Committee and the Christian Citizen Committee (CCC).[55] The Moral and Social Welfare Committee began by concerning itself with issues such as

---

51. SABH 1962-62, p 37.

52. SABH 1962-62, pp 138-140.

53. SABH 1963-64, p 36.

54. As reflected in the "church chronicles" : SABH 1948-49, p 33 ff and 36ff. See also SABH 1960-61, pp 19-28.

55. As shown in chapter 7, when the CCC became more active, its efforts were greeted with a great deal of resistance.

temperance, the sale of liquor, "native" affairs, gambling, unemployment, and health insurance.[56] For the next few years it enjoyed a precarious existence, being discontinued, re-constituted, and finally disbanded.[57] Subsequently, the CCC was created; but its secretary spoke of

> the great difficulty of finding men and women of articulate social conscience with time to spare from other church activities for this rather thankless task.[58]

This means that during the crucial period of the 1970s, when resistance to Apartheid was growing, the Baptists were unable to find more than a handful of "men and women of articulate social conscience"; moreover, those that were socially concerned experienced their work as a "thankless task".

3. Baptist Assemblies.

The content and concerns of the Baptist Assemblies faithfully reflect the interests of the white churches. Because decisions had to be made at the Assembly, a number of technical and administrative issues were raised annually. Consequently, little innovative theological discussion took place, let alone a questioning of the Baptist ministry or the interpretation of Baptist principles within the South African situation. Furthermore, the preponderance of white delegates meant that the matters discussed reflected a consistently white agenda.

The topics of the annual Presidential Address are a good indication of the concerns of the Baptist Union. Year after year evangelism, the Holy Spirit, the call to re-dedicate oneself to Christ, the Church, prayer, etc, were emphasised. In the early 1970's the following were cited as the 5 major areas in which Baptists faced a crisis : "Morality, Theology, Unity, Fidelity and Sanctity."[59] There were a few exceptions to this general rule. For example, the Assembly was addressed on the subject of "the Christian in his relationship to the State" and Rev Gilfillan spoke on "Our Debt to other Races".[60] Rev Gilfillan, in his Presidential Address of 1973, actually

---

56. SABH 1941-42, p 8 and SABH 1942-43, p 8.

57. See SABH 1944-45, p 8; SABH 1945-46, p 11; SABH 1946-47, p 5; SABH 1948-49, p 29 and SABH 1948-49, p 91.

58. SABH 1971-72, p 80.

59. SABH 1972-73, p 139.

60. SABH 1953-54, p 112 and SABH 1956-57, p 122.

raised the issue of racism directly. The Handbook reported him as saying that :

> Amongst Baptists, racial prejudice did not so much take the form of antagonism as of uninvolvement by White Christians in the difficulties, hardships and restrictions of their Black brothers.[61]

However, because concerns such as these were not fully shared by the Assembly delegates, they were not pursued by the churches. Christian experience and ministry remained privatised.

Why was it that, during a period in South African history that was fraught with socio-religious meaning, the Baptists were living in a secluded world of their own?

Firstly, the basic theological paradigm of the South African Baptists had already been formulated in the 19th century, and was perpetuated through the various forms of theological education (discussed below) offered within the Baptist Union. White Baptists controlled theological education, but they were not conscious of the ideological influences which affected their view of the Christian faith. Further, because there was virtually no meaningful contact between Baptists of different race and class groups, white Baptist perceptions were not challenged.

A second factor is that the Baptists had very little ecumenical contact either with other Christians within South Africa or with other Baptists in Africa or overseas; and such churches as they did have contact with were unlikely to be critical of their theological stance. Arguably, the links that South African Baptists had with the politically conservative American Southern Baptist Convention simply encouraged their own political conformism. They made use of tracts and booklets produced in the USA dealing with "church organisation and administration and evangelism".[62] The BU also used the Southern Baptist Convention's literature for their Sunday Schools, and Rev Reid (of the BU Christian Education Dept) went to the USA for training in SBC Sunday School methods.[63] In 1967, 31 members of the SBC assisted the BU

---

61. SABH 1973-74, p 138. Later, Rev Pass spoke about "the Reformed and Charismatic Movements respectively; and also to the racial tensions amongst us" (SABH 1974-75, p 148).

62. SABH 1959-60, p 39.

63. SABH 1963-64, p 40 and SABH 1967-68, p 69. Use was also made of religious literature produced in Australia and New Zealand.

in their year of Evangelism in holding a "Crusade for Christ".[64] Thus, rather than preparing materials suitable for the South African context, the BU relied on material produced elsewhere for their Sunday Schools and Adult Bible classes, material which did not address concrete and relevant socio-ethical issues.

The third factor is that black Baptists were either unable to develop an alternative version of what it meant to be a Christian in South Africa, or had no opportunity to articulate it.[65] The consequence was that black Baptists had little or no meaningful socio-theological input.

Finally, even though some women within the BU did exhibit a measure of social concern, in general the role of women was very limited : they had little influence and were not given the freedom to advocate a different perception of Christian service.[66] By and large, Baptist women trod the paths that had been laid down for them. The Baptist Women's Association (BWA) which had been started in 1911, concentrated on raising funds for their churches. They further sought out new members, held meetings and bible studies, and did evangelistic work.[67] The majority did not set new goals for their Association or question the theology that defined their roles in the church. Yet there is some evidence to suggest that a few Baptist women were seeking out broader forms of witness and Christian service. A BWA report expressed frustration with so-called women's roles, and pointed out that women were doing more in the churches than supplying "the proverbial cup of tea".[68] They expressed their desire to "accept the responsibility and privilege of more direct Christian contact with their sisters of the Bantu races in local locations and elsewhere."[69] Women also engaged in welfare work and visited the sick and troubled. Yet this tentative social awareness was not fostered by the BU leadership; perhaps it was not even noticed.

---

64. SABH 1968-69, p 56. (This was nearly cancelled because of South Africa's racial policies, SA Baptist, May 1967, p 2).

65. On the internalization of oppression by blacks see Villa-Vicencio, op cit pp 89 ff and D Madolo, Barkly West, p 60.

66. Cf The Women's Association of the First Baptist Church, East London : Diamond Jubilee Celebrations (1954).

67. SABH 1947-48, p 36.

68. SABH 1963-64, p 50.

69. SABH 1937-38, p 10. In the early 1940's black and white BWAs met together in Durban, SABH 1942-43, p 28.

Consequently it was not taken further, nor did it have an impact on the Church as a whole.

In short, the theological praxis of the South African Baptists remained locked within a static, restricted and socially conformist paradigm. These limitations were clearly reflected in the central concerns of the white Baptist churches and Assemblies just discussed.

C. THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS.

Theological education has both an informal side (as expressed in sermons, songs, popular literature, Baptist Handbooks, centenary documents, booklets, etc) and a formal side (as offered by theological colleges to students).

The Baptists' Religious Education Department was responsible for producing or disseminating much of the informal material offered to churches. Lists of this Department's publications include items such as the All Age Sunday School programme, children's material, a worship manual, and a booklet on conversion.(70) Another list itemizes prayer charts, tracts on baptism and hospital visitation, and a bible introduction course.(71) No material dealing with social issues is listed. Furthermore, the information included in the annual Handbooks and the monthly magazine SA Baptist (later renamed Baptists Today) was centered on the narrowly "religious" concerns of the churches. In terms of its informal education, then, the BU was clearly exhibiting and propagating an individualistic, spiritualised and dualistic Gospel.

But of equal, if not greater, importance was the formal theological education offered by the BU for the training of South African Baptist ministers.

1. Baptist Theological Colleges.

During the 19th century and for the first few decades of the 20th century, the Baptist Union was dependent on theological colleges

---

70. SABH 1967-68, p 70.

71. SABH 1970-71, p 143.

abroad.[72] Initially, ministerial training for Baptist ministers was provided through the Ministerial Education Committee who set courses to be studied privately as well as offering some tuition to prospective pastors. From 1930, Black ministers were trained separately at the Ennals Institute at Berlin in the Eastern Cape, which catered specifically for "Native Ministers and Evangelists".[73] By 1943, training for black ministers was continuing at Berlin but was also offered at the Millard Institute in Orlando near Johannesburg.[74] This policy of separate education was confirmed in the late 1940's in a report on ministerial training in which three categories of service were distinguished : English speaking Europeans, Afrikaans speaking Europeans and "non-European candidates for work amongst the non-European".[75]

The first Baptist Theological College in South Africa was opened in March 1951 in Parktown, Johannesburg.[76] The aims of this College were to : "To train ministers of the Gospel, Missionaries and Christian workers".[77] This description excluded neither blacks nor women but, given the nature of South African society and the BU, these groups were, in effect, excluded. In the early 1960's, the pattern of separate education for separate race and language groups was reinforced by the opening of the ABK's (Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk) Seminarium.[78]

In 1961, the idea of a College for "Coloured" ministers was put forward.[79] Thereafter, it was proposed at Assembly that the Executive "investigate the possibilities of establishing a Theological College or

---

72. White pastors came to South Africa from places such as Moody Bible Institute (USA), Spurgeon's College in London, and the Glasgow Theological College.

73. SABH 1930-31, p 29.

74. SABH 1943-44, p 27. For a time the Millard Institute was closed but it reopened in 1954 in order to cater for the need for spiritual leaders among the black community, cf. SABH 1954-55, p 52 and SABH 1957-58, p 68.

75. SABH 1948-49, p 41.

76. SABH 1951-52, p 34.

77. SABH 1951-52, p 108.

78. SABH 1962-62, pp 51 & 61. In the years that followed, there was some talk of amalgamating the BU Parktown college and the ABK Seminarium, but this never materialised. Eg SABH 1968-69, p 56, 66.

79. SABH 1973-74, p 76.

Colleges for our Coloured and/or Indian students."[80] In 1970, the Assembly resolved that the Alliance leaders should be consulted concerning a College for "the training of Coloured candidates for the ministry...".[81] After much debate concerning who was to be admitted to the Western Province College, it opened its doors in 1974 to "Coloured", white and, later, African students.[82]

2. Why racially separate Theological Colleges?

The first and most obvious reason was the undoubted fact of educational requirements and standards. The unequal economic and political circumstances in South Africa naturally meant that it was extremely difficult for blacks to obtain even a basic education.[83] At the Ennals Institute the admission requirement was as low as Std 6.[84] By way of contrast, the admission requirement at the Parktown College was a matriculation certificate, a policy which effectively excluded the majority of black Baptists.[85] This policy can be contrasted with that followed at Spurgeon's College in London, which accepted students whose previous education had been limited as well as those with few financial resources, and enabled them to reach their full potential.[86] The Parktown College could, for example, have catered for black students by offering a preliminary course which would have enabled them, on successful completion, to pursue their theological education alongside their fellow white students. The fact

---

80. SABH 1967-68, p 219 & SABH 1968-69, p 91. Up to this time several Coloured people had been part of the Ministerial Education training programme, SABH 1968-69, p 69.

81. SABH 1970-71, p 211. See also SABH 1971-72, pp 177ff, and J N Jonsson, Verbum Crucis Spiritu (SA Baptist Historical Society, 1980) pp 30 ff, where he argues that the "Coloured" Baptist Alliance resisted the idea of a separate "Coloured" College.

82. See the debate in L Kretzschmar, Barkly West, p 30 and C Parnell, "A Letter from Dr Chris Parnell..." pp 2-4.

83. SABH 1944-45, p 31.

84. SABH 1944-45, p 25.

85. SABH 1960-61, p 15.

86. Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Educationalist, Part 1 -General Educational Concerns" Bapt Q 31:8 (1986) p 388.

that this, or something comparable, was not done is indicative of the Baptists' acceptance of the "separate development" ideology.

The second major reason for separate theological education was that the Baptists, despite their much repeated belief in the separation of Church and State and the freedom of religion, permitted the government to decide how they should train their ministers. Thus, black students were excluded from the Parktown College because it was in a white area. Also, the Millard Institute in Orlando was forced by the government to close because of their view that blacks were not to be regarded as permanent residents in the "white" urban areas.[87] What was the Baptist response to this unwarranted interference in the Church's theological training programme? With "heavy hearts" they expressed their "deep regrets" in relation to the government's policy but they went on to describe themselves as "law-abiding South Africans"; the Missionary report claimed that "we have no option but to comply with the dictates of the Government..." [88] One might ask why they did not consider whether this was a law which ought to be <u>disobeyed</u>? Instead, they meekly considered an alternative site at Debe Nek near King William's Town.

3. Theological education and Baptist women.

A further point of critique that can be raised in relation to Baptist theological education is that it offered no real place for women. Even though the modern feminist theological debate (at least in South Africa) is of fairly recent origin, this critique remains valid for the pre-1977 period because of the roles that women of all races were already playing in Baptist churches around the country.[89] White Baptist women served as missionaries, were active in the BWA's, taught in the Sunday Schools, engaged in evangelistic work, and visited the sick. Yet they were not offered any formal theological education by the College whose aim it was to provide not only ministers, but also missionaries and Christian workers. Ironically, the BWAs annually raised money which they sent to the very theological Colleges which ignored their needs, perceptions and gifts.

---

87. SABH 1958-59, pp 56, 68, 85 and 158 and SABH 1959-60, p 65.

88. SABH 1959-60, pp 65 and 85 .

89. Also because of the legacy of the Anabaptist and English Baptist women (noted in chapters 3 and 4).

Similarly, black Baptist women were very loyal members of the Baptist church. In the rural areas, in particular, they were the mainstay of the churches. Yet their situation was even worse than that of white women for they did not have the educational opportunities, financial resources, and access to books, courses and conferences that their white "sisters" enjoyed. They also carried the heavy burdens of poverty and the lack of homes, water, land, and political representation.

There were a few exceptions to this rule. Thus, for example, in the mid 1950's, a special women's course was offered at the Parktown College for wives of prospective ministers.(90) In 1968, the BBI started a course for women students.(91) But it is difficult to regard these attempts as more than mere tokenism. In short, within the BU theological education was essentially offered only to men.

4. The privatised nature of theological education.

Baptist theological education did not adequately prepare its students for the social dilemmas which they would face in their ministries. Whilst specific attention is accorded to this matter in the next two chapters, a few preliminary comments can be made at this stage.

Theological education was directed towards the "spiritual" needs of the churches alone, and did not address the physical, social, political, and economic needs of the broader community.(92) Thus, it could not provide a basis for socio-ethical analyses nor for strategies to achieve genuine church unity across racial and cultural lines. Because the "Social Gospel" of Baptists such as the American, Walter Rauschenbusch, was rejected as a "false" Gospel, South African Baptists were unable to critique their diluted version of the Gospel and, thereby, develop a more holistic perception of the Christian faith.(93) The civil rights movement of the North American Baptist, Martin Luther King, also received little, or no, attention.

---

90. SABH 1955-56, p 40.

91. SABH 1968-69, p 102.

92. SABH 1963-64, p 45 and 48. See the Baptist Bible Institute (Prospectus, nd).

93. Cf (ed) Robert T Handy, The Social Gospel in America : 1870-1920 (New York : Oxford University Press, 1966); R Handy, "Practical and Prophetic aspects of the Social Gospel" The Chronicle (July 1955) pp 99-110; and Ernest F Clipsman, "An Englishman looks at Raushenbusch" Bapt Q 29 (1981) pp 113-121.

Not only the Colleges, but all the informal agents of Baptist theological education, such as Baptist magazines and the many of reports submitted annually at the Assemblies, tended to create in ordinary Baptist members the belief that "politics must not be mixed with religion". Yet these same people happily voted for, or at least conformed with, the discriminatory policies of the Nationalist Party. They sent their "boys to the border" and they benefitted from the political, educational, and economic policies which deliberately repressed legitimate black aspirations.

White Baptists propagated their diluted Gospel amongst black Baptists. In Marxian terms, one could say that the ruling classes used religion to legitimate their own interests whilst they promoted religion as an opiate amongst the proletariat. Religion thus served to console those who suffered, but did not prompt them to ask why they were called to suffer whilst white Baptists were called to prosper. At the Millard Institute, for example, the SABMS missionaries sought to train "spiritual" leaders for the black community.[94] But they did not analyse what the other needs of the black community were, nor why the black community was constantly having to cope with poverty, unemployment, and discrimination. Even the so-called spiritual needs of the black people were not fully addressed since the missionaries demanded that blacks repress and destroy their cultural identity and embrace a Western conception of the Christian faith. In so doing they emasculated and impoverished black religious experience.

Similar criticisms can be made concerning the theological education offered at the Baptist Bible Institute (BBI) at Debe Nek. When Rev Hendricks became the Principal at BBI, his emphases were reported to have been evangelism and the Spirit-filled ministry.[95] Whilst these are admirable in themselves, when separated from the social context in which blacks sought to survive, they operated as an opiate. Not only was the education offered at the BBI academically inferior; it also failed to equip black pastors to minister adequately to the needs of their congregations or to develop the necessary skills and confidence to challenge the white version of Baptist faith and principles.[96]

---

94. SABH 1954-55, p 52 and SABH 1957-58, p 68.

95. SABH 1967-68, p 95.

96. See P Mhlope and D Madolo, Barkly West, pp 54-55 & 60.

These, then, were the key elements of 20th century South African Baptist theology and theological education. The effect that Baptist theological perceptions and social commitments had on the subsequent development of Baptist denominational structures mission work can now be examined.

D. THE CONSEQUENCES OF PRIVATIZATION IN TERMS OF BAPTIST STRUCTURES.

An analysis of Baptist denominational structures reveals that the 19th century colonial imposition of white domination became embedded in 20th century Baptist theology, ecclesiastical practices, and structures. This was the logical consequence of a privatised Gospel that drew a theoretical line between religious faith and secular existence while in practice serving the interests of whites.

The effect of the denominational structures was to separate white, African, Indian and, to a lesser extent, "Coloured" Baptists at congregational, regional and national levels, whilst maintaining white control over Baptist affairs through means of the BU Executive, office bearers, and white pastors.[97] The black congregations, especially the African congregations, were controlled through the missionaries and superintendents of the SABMS, many of whom were members of the Bantu Baptist Church Executive.[98] Further, the BBC was given only extremely limited access to the primary decision-making body, namely the National BU Assembly. In this process, at least two stages can be discerned : the emergence of separation, and the consolidation of control.

1. The emergence of separation.

Even though, from 1892 onwards, the Baptists engaged in a number of missionary or, more accurately, evangelistic enterprises among black South Africans, the blacks who were converted were not included in the Baptist Union structure that had existed since 1877. Whereas there previously existed a de facto separation between the white churches and the black

---

97. See D Manuel, Barkly West, pp 43 ff; Hudson-Reed, By Taking Heed, pp 235-289.

98. The BBC was later called the Bantu Baptist Convention (SABH 1967-68, p 102) and, from 1970 on, the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa (SABH 1970-71, p 141).

missions, in 1927, this separation was formalised with the establishment of the Bantu Baptist Church (BBC). The BBC was established to incorporate various black Baptist churches including those started by National Baptist missionaries from America. The BBC was ostensibly part of the BU; but in actual fact, it was incorporated into and subject to the SABMS. It is significant that, as Hendricks notes, members of these churches came unwillingly into the BBC.[99] There was also resistance amongst white missionaries to the attempts of the (American) National Baptist Convention (NBC) to organise an independent and "indigenous" Baptist Association in South Africa consisting of Africans who had visited the USA. According to Sandy Martin,

> ... they convinced the colonial government that these moves were part of the Ethiopian movement, which they envisioned as an attempt by the Africans to claim equality with whites and overthrow the white government.[100]

The consequences of the formation of the BBC as an association of the SABMS/BU were enormous, for the black congregations were henceforth not regarded as churches but as part of the "mission field". Consequently, Associations such as the BBC were only in theory part of the BU.[101] The creation of the BBC meant that black Baptists were to be permanently excluded from direct and full membership of the Baptist Union. The report of the inauguration of the BBC is filled with indisputable examples of white missionary perceptions of themselves as morally, socially and spiritually superior to Africans. Furthermore, it blatantly states that the BBC must be subject "to European control".[102]

In effect, then, the BU closely resembled the DRC model of racially separate churches, except that the DRC model was, perhaps, more honest in its open racial segregation. Furthermore, contrary to the Baptists' stated belief in congregational government, the structure of the BU did not allow

---

99. J A Hendricks, Baptists in Southern Africa (King William's Town : Bethany Emmanuel Church, 1959) p 85.

100. Sandy D Martin, "Spelman's Emma B DeLaney and the African mission" Journal of Religious Thought 41 (1984-85) p 30.

101. The Indian Baptists, too, were never fully part of the Union's structure; cf (ed) N Timothy, "The Diamond Jubilee of Indian Baptist work in South Africa : 1903-1978" and T D Pass, "Light and Shade : A study of Indian Baptist work in South Africa : 1903-1975" IN (ed) S Hudson-Reed, Baptists in South Africa, 122pp.

102. See Bantu Baptist Church : Report of Inauguration at Tshabo, King William's Town (Cape Town : Townsend, 1927) pp 10-14.

for the rise of blacks to senior positions within the denomination as a whole.

In 1910, the BBC membership was just under 1000 but, by 1951, African Baptists numbered over 14,000 people.[103] During the period 1951-52, the "European churches" had 10,031 members and the "Missionary" churches 15,047 members.[104] By 1958, the membership statistics were as follows : Europeans 11,727; Africans 22,456; "Coloureds" and Indians 2,421.[105] Thus, even though there were twice as many black as there were white Baptists in South Africa, they were excluded from equal membership in the Union.

Why was this the case? Only two possibilities present themselves: either white Baptists did not fully realise what they were doing; or else they were pursuing a deliberate policy. The first possibility hardly need be considered. The leaders of the BU were quite capable of simple arithmetic, and they knew that the numbers of black Baptists were growing more rapidly than were the numbers of white Baptists. They also knew that, given the formal separation of the BBC members from the BU, blacks could <u>not</u> attain a position of influence within the BU itself. This separation of mission and church could only have been a deliberate policy of exclusion. Blacks were urged to be converted, but they were not permitted to become full members of the Baptist Union of churches. In short, black Baptists were acceptable to God, but not to white Baptists.[106]

By the 1930's, the BU constitution defined a Baptist church as :

> ... a body of Protestant Christians accepting in all matters of faith and practice the guidance of the Holy Scriptures, practising believer's baptism by immersion, and in membership with the Union.[107]

The final clause of this definition was ambiguous because black churches were "in membership with the Union" only under the auspices of the SABMS and the BBC. Because they were not direct members of the BU they were, technically,

---

103. SABH 1951-52, p 47.

104. SABH 1952-53, p 89. The "Non-European churches and missions", ie the Coloured churches had 800 members whilst the Indian churches consisted of 916 members (SABH 1952-53, p 91).

105. SABH 1958-59, p 35.

106. Cf the Jew-Gentile issue in Acts 11 & 15 and Galatians 2.

107. SABH 1933-34 p 32.

not churches but "missions".[108] Not only was this an insult to established African churches, but it served as a mechanism of exclusion.[109]

The exclusion of black Baptists from ordinary membership in the BU further meant that separate Assemblies were held. The BU met annually and the BBC met every two years. The BBC Assemblies were seldom attended by whites other than full-time missionaries serving with the SABMS whilst few, if any, blacks attended the BU Assemblies.[110] Consequently, BU decisions were generally made without taking any account of the religious experience of black Baptists.

In the mid-1950's, it was decided that each Association would be permitted to send one representative to the BU Assembly, and two representatives if their Association consisted of more than 2000 members.[111] In effect, this meant that even though black Baptists numbered over 50% of the entire membership, they were represented by only two people.[112] A single white church had the same voting power at the Assembly as thousands of black Baptists, simply because black Baptists were structurally excluded from being full member churches of the BU. Given this situation it is lamentable that, as recently as 1974, Rev Goetze (then the secretary of the Baptist Convention) could write concerning the separate black Baptist Assembly that it "... was a living testimony to the truth of the theme 'one in Christ Jesus'. The spirit of unity [he said] was a real blessing to all."[113]

On the basis of the evidence cited above, it is clear that, despite resolutions to the government expressing criticism of their policies, the Baptists actively promoted the policy of separation within their internal structures. Thus, "parallel" regional councils consisting of black BBC and

---

108. In contrast, the Chinese Baptist church was accepted into full membership in 1955, SABH 1955-56, p 101.

109. Coloured churches accepted into membership by the BU (eg SABH 1933-34, p 23 & SABH 1965-66, p 44), but African churches were taken into membership of the BBC (eg SABH 1933-34, p 17).

110. At that stage, the BBC was permitted to send a single representative to the BU Assemblies (SABH 1948-49, p 94).

111. SABH 1955-56, p 105.

112. "Black Baptist work in South Africa" by G Makhanya in Concern 1:2 (March 1989) p 3.

113. SABH 1974-75, p 94.

white BU members were established.[114] In the early 1950's the "Coloured" churches established their own Western Province Association.[115]

During the early 1970's there were plans afoot to revise the structure of the Baptist Union. In effect, nothing significant was achieved because the BBC churches were not accepted as full members of the BU : in brief, Baptists of different races were separated in terms of membership, attendance at Baptist Assemblies, and participation in the various "general" and "regional" Associations.[116]

2. The Consolidation of Control.

White Baptists maintained control over the BU (and the BBC) through various means. One mechanism of control has already been outlined, namely separation. Attention can now be given to the leadership structures of the BU and the BBC as well as the financial control that was exercised over the denomination.

Throughout the period 1892-1977, the leadership of the Baptist Union remained in the hands of a specific group, identifiable as male, white, middle-class and clerical. This is revealed in the election of the office-bearers for the various BU committees as well as the BU and SABMS Executive.[117] Leadership was not only limited to white, generally middle-class, men, it was also dominated by ministers.[118] The influence of this group was not limited to the white churches; they also exercised control over the BBC churches.[119] During this period, no blacks held positions in BU churches or Committees.

---

114. SABH 1947-48, p 41.

115. SABH 1951-52, p 42. In 1955, both the German Bund and the existing Border Association dissolved and formed a new "united", white regional association (SABH 1954-55, p 41 & SABH 1947-48, p 33-36).

116. SABH 1973-74, p 141 and SABH 1974-75, pp 76, 81.

117. The BU and the SABMS were jointly administered by the BU Executive, thus, control has remained in (a few) white hands (See, eg, SABH 1949-50, p 60). Some of the top BU leaders have been in power for nearly 30 years.

118. SABH 1974-75, pp 155-56.

119. In the 1930's both the Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the BBC were whites SABH 1938-39, p 33. The first African moderator was Rev S Mashelogu, SABH 1946-47, p 27. See also SABH 1958-59, p 66.

These practices meant that both women and blacks (and especially black women) were excluded from the decision-making processes of the BU. Despite their numerical preponderance and their dedicated efforts within the Baptist Women's Association, women were seldom elected to hold office.[120] Further, the BWA representatives (other than the two representatives permitted to them as an Association) were not regarded as delegates to the Assembly; rather they met separately during the Annual Assemblies.[121] Similarly, blacks were not elected because they were expected to operate within the ambit of the BBC.

There is a close similarity in the way that white women and blacks were treated by the BU leadership and local white ministers. The services of women and blacks were widely used in both church and missionary work, but neither were given status, authority or decision-making powers. Through Associations such as the BWA and the BBC they were granted the illusion of participation, but they were neither permitted nor enabled to question the dominant understanding of what it meant to be a Christian, and particularly a Baptist, within the South African context.

The other major mechanism of control exercised by the white churches was financial. White access to the economy (the land as well as the mining and manufacturing sectors) meant that white Baptists were much richer than black Baptists. But their excess money, rather than being used for the development of black Baptist churches or to improve the daily existence of deliberately impoverished blacks, was generally used to develop their own white churches. For example, in 1954, the contribution of the European churches to the SABMS was £12,836. Given that the European membership that year amounted to 10,408, this meant that each member, on average, contributed a little over £1 to the work of the SABMS for the total year.[122] That same year, the new (white) church in Salisbury (which was at that stage part of the BU) was opened. The church and furnishings cost £25,000, but the total value including land, the manse, etc was estimated at £40,000.[123]

---

120. One exception is to be found in the 1955 list of BU officers where a woman's name appears : she was the Baptist representative to the Temperance Alliance, SABH 1955-56, p 102.

121. See SABH 1957-58, p 113-115.

122. SABH 1954-55, p 45.

123. SABH 1954-55, p 39. A few years earlier, in 1948, the new Pretoria Central church was built at a cost of £16,000 (SABH 1949-50, p 47).

Because blacks could not own property outside the reserves, all title deeds were registered in the name of the SABMS/BU, and not in the name of particular "native" churches. This reduced African churches to a form of perpetual childhood : only the BU held legal rights over these properties. As a result, when the Baptist Convention split off in 1987, an immediate conflict over church property ensued.

The BU operated two separate Pension Funds, one for white ministers and the other for the African ministers of the BBC.[124] By 1954, a retired white minister received £125 per annum, whilst a black minister received £24.[125] By 31 December 1967, the total capital of the Pension Fund for African Baptists stood at R9,945, whilst the figure for the BU's Fund was R179,931.[126] During the next few years, an effort was made to increase the African ministers' Pension Fund by contributions from the BU. By 31 December 1971 the capital sum had increased to R36,000 but, by that time, the BU fund stood at R341,701.[127] A year later, African ministers were receiving R13 a month, and their widows R6.50.[128] It is not surprising that this exhibition of white greed and insensitivity caused deep resentment amongst African Baptists.

In addition to these monetary manipulations, the difficulties that black Baptists experienced in their efforts to become "self-supporting" churches were used as a reason to deny them full membership within the BU. Black churches were expected to meet the same requirements as white churches, which included that the churches be self-supporting. But white Baptists did not take into cogniscence the fact that, despite structural economic deprivation, some black churches were either partially or fully self-

---

124. The white Pension Fund was started in 1911, whereas the African Pension Fund was first mentioned in the early 1950s, SABH 1952-53, p 92 and SABH 1954-55, p 44.

125. Cf SABH 1954-55, pp 102 & 105, SABH 1958-59, p 83 and SABH 1959-60, p 87.

126. SABH 1968-69, p 127.

127. SABH 1972-73, pp 89, 67.

128. SABH 1973-74, p 85. In 1965, it was decided that the BU Pension Fund be extended to Chinese, Coloured and Indian, but not to African, Baptists (SABH 1965-66, p 170).

supporting.[129] In addition, the vast majority of African churches were built by the Africans themselves through various self-help schemes.[130] Money was also raised by these churches for expenses incurred during the BBC Assemblies.[131] In other words, even though black Baptists were making strenuous efforts to build up their membership and buildings, they were rigorously excluded from full BU membership and, thereby, the corridors of power.

How were white Baptists able to justify their leadership and financial domination? Firstly, the policy of separation not only blinded the perception of whites throughout the country to the exploitation blacks suffered, but also blunted the consciences of white Baptists. The social and ecclesiastical experiences of black Baptists simply did not figure significantly in the thinking of white Baptists.

Secondly, the privatised theology and theological education prevalent in the BU resulted in an emphasis on personal spiritual concerns, and the development of church activities and facilities. Concerning wider social issues and the problems faced by black Baptists, apathy was the prevailing response.

Thirdly, the Baptist doctrine of congregational government and autonomy was seriously misunderstood and abused. In effect, this doctrine was used to promote insularity. Autonomy became a justification for racial separation and the legitimation of white self-interest. White autonomous churches, in effect, pursued white, middle-class religious concerns. The black Baptist churches, on the other hand, though structurally separate, were not permitted to be autonomous. They remained subject to BU policy decisions and the views of the white SABMS missionaries. In reality, they were dependent on white Baptist theological models and financial resources.

In conclusion, then, the deep racial divisions within South Africa were perpetuated within Baptist structures. Black congregations were "missions" rather than "churches" and, as such, they were excluded from BU membership. This policy was consolidated by the creation of the BBC in 1927 and the resultant separation of Baptists with regard to membership, attendance at

---

129. SABH 1937-38, p 34. In 1967, the SABMS reported that several churches in the Transvaal region were supporting their ministers (SABH 1967-68, p 116 and SABH 1970-71, p 101).

130. Eg SABH 1945-46, p 30; SABH 1954-55, p 56.

131. SABH 1955-56, p 54.

Assemblies, the work of the Associations, and financial control. The consequence was mutual ignorance, white indifference and black resentment. White domination was perpetuated and the empowerment of black (and female) Baptists was frustrated and retarded. The BU was imprisoned by the restrictive consequences of its own policies.

E. THE BAPTISTS, PRIVATIZATION AND MISSION.

The preceding section has shown that a spiritualised interpretation of the Gospel made it possible for the Baptists to preach "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" without believing that this entailed "one church". Similarly, their missionary endeavours between 1892 and 1977 were characterised by separation, white domination and black dependence.

In this section, attention is given to the definitions of mission and missionary, early missionary work and later SABMS policies, and an analysis of the effects of this privatised conception of mission.

1. Definitions of the terms "mission" and "missionary".

The understanding of mission within the Baptist Union was, and is, predominantly that of evangelism.[132] As stated in the Baptist Handbook of 1944-45, "... the one unchanging and supreme task of the church is evangelism".[133] Further, evangelism itself was narrowly understood as the preaching of the Gospel of individual salvation to lost souls. This concept of mission is also reflected in the Rev Stuart Akers' thesis.[134]

This limited conception of mission resulted in the continued attempts to win converts to the faith without addressing the socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts within which these persons (who were not simply disembodied souls) and communities lived.

---

132. Cf C W Hill's discussion of "why the church exists?" in Baptist Elders (Roodepoort : Baptist Publishing House, 1975).

133. SABH 1944-45, p 1 see also SABH 1948-49, p 32. The terms mission and evangelism are consistently used as synonyms in the Baptist Handbooks, eg SABH 1967-68, p 74.

134. "South African Baptists involved in Missions...", op cit, pp 5 ff. Akers mentions world missiologists (p 4) but does not discuss the implications of the work of the South African missiologist, David Bosch.

But what, then, of the term missionary? Throughout the period 1892-1977, this title was given only to white persons.[135] Whites were perceived to be the agents of mission, whilst blacks were regarded as the objects of mission.[136] Even consistently loyal and conscientious "native" pastors never attained the status of "missionary". For example, the Rev S Mashelogu ministered for 53 years, but was never in charge of his own region.[137]

What was the role of women in all of this? White women were given the title "missionary", and many white women (married and single) were active within the SABMS.[138] Despite their enormous contribution, however, these women were never "in charge" of male missionaries. They only held senior positions "on the mission field" if a man was not available.[139] Even if a woman had been working in an area for an extended period, a man's arrival gave him the immediate title of "superintendent."[140]

Also worth noting is that although much was made of these "lady missionaries", deeper questions were not asked about the implications of the nature of their ministries.[141] These women were engaged in ministries which included preaching, teaching, leadership, the establishment of new churches, etc. Seemingly, as long as such things occurred "on the mission

---

135. Eg SABH 1839-40, p 24 and SABH 1959-60, p 137.

136. Black Baptists were never referred to as missionaries, but as "Native Members, Deacons and Helpers" or "Bantu workers" eg SABH 1908-9, p 32; SABH 1946-47, p 22; and SABH 1949-50, p 62.

137. See SABH 1968-69, p 197. Other examples include the Rev Abel Jotile who served for 20 years in East Pondoland (SABH 1937-38, p 21), and others such as Rev J J Mgwigwi (SABH 1951-52, p 107), Rev Masango (SABH 1953-54, p 123) and Rev Solwandle (SABH 1959-60, p 151), who received brief mentions in the Handbooks at the time of their deaths.

138. Eg Ms Box and Ms Field (SABH 1908-9, p 33) and Ms Cockburn, Ms Skinner, Ms Brailsford, Ms Doke (SABH 1930-31, pp 11-12). Ms J Morck was the first person linked with the SABMS to work amongst the Indian Baptists, (SABH 1955-56, p 66).

139. Eg Ms Price bore the responsibility for three Stations "until Mr Lowe took charge" (SABH 1908-9, p 33). See also SABH 1931-32, p 13.

140. After Ms Doke had served for 20 years in Lambaland, it was not she but the Revs Rendall and Kidd who were listed as the superintendents (SABH 1950-51, p 46 and SABH 1953-54, p 51)

141. See SABH 1941-42, p 16 (concerning Ms Doke) and SABH 1941-42, p 70 (concerning Ms Cockburn's 37 years of missionary work). See also SABH 1952-53, p 40-41.

field" amongst blacks, they were acceptable, but in the white congregations the roles of women were quite different.

What, then, was the position of black women? As early as the 1930's the SABMS reported that women were influential leaders, preachers and administrators.[142] Black women were used as interpreters, and the so-called "bible women" were active in the churches and Sunday Schools.[143] Despite the missionaries' awareness of the gifts and ministry of such women, they were not provided with any formal theological training.[144]

Because the white missionaries presided over very large areas, usually visiting black Baptist churches only a few times a year, the real "missionaries" were the hundreds of black Baptists who were active in their churches, most of whom were never paid.[145] In 1937, for example, of the 533 "native" preachers and other workers, 28 were either ordained or probationers and 31 were evangelists or teachers. These 59 were paid small amounts by the SABMS and local black churches, and all the rest (some 88%, including some 200 women workers) were are not paid.[146]

These narrow definitions of "mission" and "missionary" caused incalculable damage to the Baptist witness and to race relations within the Baptist Union.

2. Early missionary work and later SABMS policy.

As indicated in chapter five, the German Baptists commenced missionary work in Kaffraria in 1868. In 1899, work commenced in Pondoland, spreading to E Griqualand. By 1899, missionaries were active throughout all the regions of what is today Transkei. By 1914, the Baptists were active in Lambaland (Zambia) and in 1917, they commenced work in the Transvaal.[147] As time went by, mission work was started in other areas of South Africa.

---

142. SABH 1935-36, p 26 and SABH 1937-38, p 29. White male missionaries could detect sexism in African culture but not in their own culture : see SABH 1958-59, pp 73-77 and SABH 1955-56, p 57-58.

143. SABH 1937-38, p 30. Eg Mrs Somagaca of the Transkei SABH 1947-48, p 43 and Ms Makohliso and Ms Jostinah (Nkuhlu) SABH 1963-64, p 75.

144. Occasionally, the wives of white missionaries (who often had not themselves been theologically educated) provided some teaching.

145. SABH 1932-33, p 18.

146. SABH 1937-38, pp 21 & 26.

147. The work amongst the Telegu Indians in Natal was an initiative of Baptists in India; see Batts, op cit, p 161.

Up to the mid-1940's, these efforts were concentrated in the rural areas; only later were efforts made to secure church sites in the townships.[148]

Baptist mission work was also being pioneered by black Christians. The Rev Lepele, for example, initiated and led a number of churches. In the late 1930's, he requested that his pioneering efforts become part of the SABMS.[149] At that stage his work included 516 members, four buildings and 13 preaching centres, and it was self-supporting. Even so, these people were incorporated into the BBC and not into the BU as member churches along with white member churches.

Two central features of SABMS policy during the period between 1892 and 1977 were the separation of white and black Baptist churches from each other and the maintenance of white control over the SABMS and BBC.

This separation was the result of a movement from racially integrated to racially separated churches. During the 19th century, racially integrated churches existed. J D Odendaal (the founder of the Afrikaans Baptist churches) was very active in mission work amongst black farm workers, especially in the Harrismith district in the Orange Free State.[150] In the Sugarloaf church there were, by 1903, 21 "native" and 51 white members in the congregation.[151] Similarly, the German Baptists' commitment to evangelism soon won them some Xhosa converts who attended the same churches as the German settlers, and some of whom actually became full members.[152]

This situation of racial integration did not last for long. In the Western Cape, for example, evangelistic efforts on the part of the Wynberg church amongst the so-called Coloured people led to the founding of separate churches.[153] Furthermore, in the earliest Port Elizabeth church (built in Walmer Road in 1898), the whites and "Coloureds" initially met in the same church. By 1914, the whites had prospered and they gave the old church building to the "Coloureds" and built themselves a new church in Victoria

148. SABH 1946-47, p 28.

149. SABH 1937-38, p 23.

150. Cf Batts, op cit, p 106.

151. Akers, op cit, p 22.

152. Akers, ibid, p 17.

153. Cf Batts, ibid, p 164.

Park.[154] This pattern of separation became increasingly common within the South African Baptist tradition long before it was entrenched by the Group Areas Act of 1950.

In defence of the Baptists, it needs to be noted that the Baptists were not the only ones in South Africa to adopt this policy. Indeed, a vigorous debate on this very issue took place amongst the churches.[155] By the 1940's, however, Baptists had coined the phrase "the evangelisation of the Bantu by the Bantu".[156] Baptists conformed to a pattern of segregation which was based on a spiritualization of Christian unity, white assumptions of superiority, and the growing class differentiation between blacks and whites in South Africa.

The second significant element of Baptist mission policy was that of white control over black Baptists. An early example of this was the reaction of white Baptists to the news of black initiated and self-supporting churches.[157] These churches

> needed guiding. The natives were very excitable and inclined to excesses. Many of these people came under the direction of the Rev E R Davies... A portion of these were put under Mr Joyce... Native ministers and evangelists work under his direction...[158]

Missionary reports stressed the importance of the supervision of black churches by whites.[159] In addition, control was maintained over black Baptist churches in that African ministers were only ordained after authorisation by the BU Executive.[160] The superintendents, too, were appointed by the SABMS Executive and then "introduced" to the African churches, rather than being jointly appointed after consultation.[161] Also, if missionary policy was to be changed, the matter was discussed with

---

154. See Where it all began (no pagination) concerning the Walmer and Victoria Park churches; also Batts, op cit, p 38.

155. J W de Gruchy, The Church Struggle, pp 8-15.

156. SABH 1947-48, p 39. By the early 1960's it was a definite SABMS policy (SABH 1960-61, p 65); see also The staight furrow (SABMS, 1962) p 32.

157. They were placed under white supervision, Akers, ibid, p 27.

158. Batts, op cit, p 144 (my emphases).

159. Eg SABH 1933-34, pp 13 and 17.

160. SABH 1930-31, p 12.

161. SABH 1970-71, p 121.

officers of the BU, the Superintendents, and the BU Executive, but not with the African ministers.[162]

The role played by the superintendents evoked much resentment, even though as persons some of them were genuinely respected and liked.[163] Their task was to visit churches "bringing advice, help and encouragement" to the black churches.[164] These men were dedicated and travelled huge distances over extremely bad roads, but there is little doubt that they were "in charge" rather than in partnership with the black church leaders. If the distances were too great for the white superintendents of a particular field to visit the black congregations regularly, local white churches were asked to supervise them.[165] Even the outstanding ministry of Rev William Duma was exercised under the supervision of Rev B Robbins.[166] These white pastors (or supervisory committees) were responsible, not to the local black congregations, but to the white superintendents and the BU/SABMS executive.[167]

A final element of white control was financial. The extent of the SABMS budget was determined by the BU Executive and ratified at the predominantly white BU Assemblies. In addition, the SABMS budget, once approved, was controlled by the missionaries and superintendents. The funds allocated to the SABMS were spent mainly on the salaries and expenses of white missionaries (and some African pastors) and administration.[168]

In short, separation and white missionary supervision were the principal features of SABMS policy. Black ministers and evangelists were always under white supervision, never in partnership. This was a direct contradiction of the Baptist principle of self-governing churches.

---

162. When a new missionary committee was formed, it included only one representative from the BBC (SABH 1958-59, pp 81-82).

163. See G Makhanya "Black Baptist work in South Africa", op cit, p 3 and Mhlope, Barkly West, p 55.

164. SABH 1958-59, p 76.

165. SABH 1946-47, p 28 and SABH 1930-31, pp 9-10. At times members and even the "young people" of white churches were given the task of supervision (SABH 1942-43, p 16).

166. SABH 1946-47, p 20. See also M Garnett, Take your glory Lord : William Duma, his life story (Roodepoort : Baptist Publishing House, 1979).

167. SABH 1948-49, p 56.

168. SABH 1967-68, p 99.

Therefore, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that white Baptists had sacrificed their theological principles to the prevailing ideology of racial segregation and white domination.

3. The consequences of this privatised view of mission.

The preceding section has shown how the terms mission and missionaries were defined, and that racial separation and white control were prominent features of the SABMS's policy. Attention can now be given to the consequences of this privatised conception of mission.

a) An a-contextual approach to mission work.

Because mission was conceived of as evangelism (narrowly understood), mission amounted to the saving of souls without reference to the context within which these individuals or groups lived.[169] An exception to this general rule is the attention paid to the issue of physical healing. Thus, at the Jubilee Mission hospital in Hammanskraal, medical missionaries sought to introduce a more holistic vision of salvation.[170] Such efforts were, however, few and far between and did not radically effect the narrow perceptions of mission commonly held within the BU.

The BU's perceptions are reflected, for example, in this description of the priorities of the SABMS's missionary director, namely : prayer; the instruction of black preachers; evangelism; and children's work.[171] This description makes no mention of the social context of missionary work nor of the physical or social needs of those to whom the Gospel is preached. The same view of mission is also reflected in the issues emphasised by white missionaries, that is, evangelism, tithing and stewardship.[172] The repeated stress on stewardship is remarkable because it is emphasised without taking into account the enforced and gross economic inequalities within South African society that precluded the development of wealthy, even economically viable, black churches. It also illustrates the emptiness and hypocrisy of BU Assembly resolutions on socio-political and economic issues.

---

169. Cf Duties of the Missionary (SABMS, nd).

170. Cf A growing concern (SABMS, 1964) pp 54-64 and The sound of many voices (SABMS, 1965) pp 26-30.

171. See SABH 1956-57, p 55 and SABH 1957-58, p 57.

172. Examples include SABH 1967-68, p 124-25 and SABH 1968-69, pp 109-111.

b) White Baptists remained largely unaware of their own ideological commitments.

This a-contextual approach rendered white Baptists incapable of criticising their own ideological commitments. This point is clearly demonstrated in the following quotation, which speaks of

> ... the Christian or Missionary ideal on the one hand, and the pagan and the worldly ideal manifest in those whom we serve and those who are unwilling to bear the white man's burden on the other hand...[173]

Note, firstly, how the writer contrasts "Christian" (Western) ideals and "pagan" (African) ideals; and, secondly, how it is assumed that Christian (and Baptist) missionaries are called to take up "the white man's burden" because the pagan races are manifestly inferior and incapable of managing their own affairs.[174]

White Baptists also perceived "African nationalism" and the "indigenous sects" as a threat to mission work. Not only were Baptists seemingly unable to analyse the legitimate reasons for the emergence of these protest movments, but they were also unable to develop similar criticisms concerning the effects of Afrikaner nationalism or English arrogance on mission work in the South African context.[175]

There are indications that some Baptist missionaries were aware that the Gospel they preached was too European. But such isolated perceptions did not lead to a noticeable change of opinion concerning African culture or the "indigenous sects". Nor were white Baptists able to relinquish control, despite being aware of calls for African independence.[176] In short, this limited awareness of their context and its challenges did not lead to radical changes in SABMS.[177]

c) A negative view of African life, culture and religious consciousness.

Baptist missionaries not only failed to be self-critical, but they also launched a concerted attack on all things African. African culture was

---

173. SABH 1908-9, p 30.

174. Cf Co-operation - the Keyword (SABMS, 1961) pp 6-7 and A growing concern (SABMS, 1964) p 26.

175. SABH 1959-60, pp 63-64.

176. SABH 1962-63, p 62-63.

177. SABH 1963-64, pp 61-62, 72-73, 87-88 and 95.

repeatedly depicted as primitive, barbarous or inferior. Africa was spoken of as the Dark Continent and missionaries referred to the "backward races" amongst whom they worked.[178] At a time when the Black Consciousness movement was emerging in South Africa, the SABMS report quoted this extract from a poem by Claude Mackay "... am I not Afric's son, Black of that black land where black deeds are done?"[179]

African religious perceptions and experience were consistently treated as examples of heathenism.[180] SABMS reports spoke of the need for African converts to be separated from "the grip of sorceries and superstitions" and "heathenish" practices, and for their "souls" to be "won from heathen darkness".[181] But whereas the missionaries perceived the African environment as interwoven with oppressive, demonic and un-Christian elements, they were not critical of the oppressive, demonic and un-Christian elements inherent in the political and economic policies of the South African government. Thus, not only did the cultural differences between black and white Baptists create enormous problems of communication, but the denigration of all things African meant that African Baptists were continually judged in terms of Western Christianity. These differences were seen as reasons to separate Baptists from each other. Cumulatively, the racial, cultural and class differences between South African Baptists constituted a seemingly insurmountable barrier.

d) The failure to learn from the African Independent Churches (AICs).

All of the above meant that, when the AICs began to emerge, they were roundly condemned : Baptist (and other) missionaries were unable to be critical of their own efforts in the light of the successes of the AICs.[182]

---

178. SABH 1930-31, p 11 and SABH 1931-32, p 18.

179. SABH 1967-68, p 93.

180. SABH 1958-59, p 73. See also J A Henricks, Baptists in Southern Africa, pp 78-79.

181. See Acts and Possibilities (The annual report of the BUSA and the SABMS, Grahamstown, 1923) p 17. Also cf SABH 1940-41, p 12; SABH 1945-46, p 28; SABH 1952-53, p 42; and SABH 1967-68, p 93.

182. Cf G Cuthbertson, "Cave of Adullam : Missionary reaction to Ethiopianism at Lovedale, 1898-1902" Miss 19:1 (1991) pp 57-64.

Early in the 20th century, SABMS reports began noting the emergence of new religious groups and the fact that the Baptist churches were losing members to these "Ethiopian" groups.[183] For the next few decades, numbers of black Baptists, especially in the Transkei and Pondoland, joined these "strange sects".[184]

These developments were interpreted as desertions not only from the Baptist church but from the Gospel itself.[185] These "innumerable sects", were seen as offering people an "easy religion", and prayers were offered for the "Native" Baptist churches that they would "be kept pure, and free from the errors and extravagances which are so easily picked up from churches not under European guidance".[186] Missionary reports spoke of Baptist members in E Pondoland and E Griqualand "... who have been enticed aside by Ethiopian anti-white propaganda and led to join purely Native churches."[187]

What is absent from all these reports is an awareness that these churches were offering a vibrancy of faith far beyond "mere heathenism". Rather than seeking to learn from this fast-growing movement, Baptists condemned it because of their negative preconceptions concerning African culture and religious consciousness.

e) The failure of Baptists to re-define their view of mission.

The BU leadership and missionaries failed to respond to the South African context by re-defining mission. For example, even though Baptist missionaries were conscious of the dire conditions of poverty, malnutrition, and unemployment under which their converts lived, they did very little to respond theologically or practically to this context of deprivation. The extreme poverty of the people and their need to contract themselves as a migrant labourers were noted, but no attempt was made to analyse the political and economic reasons for their condition.[188] Other than the medical mission already mentioned, the dispatch of Christmas parcels, and

183. SABH 1908-9, p 33.

184. SABH 1931-32, p 10 and SABH 1943-44, p 30.

185. SABH 1930-31, p 15.

186. SABH 1941-42, p 18.

187. SABH 1930-31, p 11.

188. SABH 1945-46, p 23 and SABH 1949-50, p 72.

occasional relief work in times of flood and drought, white Baptists did not address the socio-economic distress of their fellow-believers.[189]

f) White indifference concerning mission work amongst black South Africans.

Continued racial separation resulted in whites taking little interest in the activities of the SABMS. The involvement of white Baptists was increasingly limited to prayer and financial contributions. Nor did white Baptists (other than the missionaries) attend the black Baptist Assemblies. At the 1948 Baptist Union Assembly, for example, the outgoing BU president stated that he had been the first BU president to attend the BBC Assembly for a period of 10 years.[190]

The essence of the matter was that white Christians had little or no desire to live and worship within an integrated society. They did little to campaign actively for the socio-political and economic rights of the blacks in South Africa, preferring to keep their politics and their religion in separate, water-tight compartments. As the social chasm between whites and blacks grew ever wider, separate churches could be more easily justified on the basis of differences of culture, language, race and class. In short, whites first created the economic conditions of dominance and dependance and then justified the structural separation of Christian believers by means of a spiritualised and dualistic Gospel.

The white lack of interest in black Baptist churches was further reflected in the relatively small amounts of money they gave to the SABMS. Whilst a few churches gave large amounts of money to mission work, the overall picture is one of apathy and indifference. Very few white Baptists were prepared to be missionaries or to be involved with the black churches in their own regions. Money, and precious little of it, was virtually all they gave. An analysis of the "Church Chronicles" and "Association" reports in the Baptist Handbooks reveals that white churches were becoming increasingly prosperous whilst, simultaneously, the SABMS reports continued to comment on black poverty.[191] In the early 1960's the annual per capita giving of white members to the work of the SABMS was R3.31.[192]

---

189. See SABH 1946-47, p 17-18 SABH 1959-60, pp 69, 72, 82.

190. SABH 1948-49, p 84.

191. Eg SABH 1951-52, p 38 & 48.

192. SABH 1962-63, p 66.

Between 1947-1965 the proportion of the income of European and "Coloured" churches handed over to the BU and SABMS projects declined by 26%.[193] For the period 1967-68, the 17,260 white (and "Coloured") Baptists gave a total of R 88,000 to the SABMS. This amounted to R5 per member for the entire year.[194] The very next year it was recorded that the white churches increased the value of their properties by the amount of R340,000 in a single year (this figure does not include the amount spent internally by individual white churches on salaries, administration, etc.) The BU budget for the period 1972-73 reflected an expected expenditure of R312,395, of which an amount of R192,500 (nearly two-thirds) was earmarked for the SABMS. But this is a misleading statistic since the amount of R312,395 did not represent the entire budget of all the BU churches, but only the relatively small amount which they sent annually to BU head office.[195] In other words, the bulk of the local white churches' incomes (which they derived from their economically privileged position) was spent each year on their own priorities.

g) The effect of SABMS attitudes and policies on black Baptists.

The extensive effects of segregation and white domination are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, but a few comments can be made here. Black Baptists were separated from meaningful contact with white Baptists. Even more damaging, SABMS policies caused Africans to become distanced from their own people.[196] The enforced rejection of African culture resulted in black Baptists being alienated from their own cultural identity and heritage. For example, it was said of Rev Petros Seloane : "He battled hard against the heathen customs and traditions of his own people."[197] The SABMS reports reveal no discussion of the relationship between Christianity and culture (either black or white) nor of which cultural practices are compatible or incompatible with Christianity.

The policies and structures of the BU also did not allow, let alone encourage, the emergence of self-confident black leaders who could critique

193. SABH 1965-66, p 43.

194. SABH 1968-69, pp 59 & 100.

195. SABH 1973-74, p 141.

196. See the case of Rev Elias Mabena (SABH 1965-66, p 178).

197. SABH 1964-65, p 161.

the privatised version of the Gospel propagated within the SABMS. For example, a SABMS report delightedly reported the conversion of a certain Mr Kunene "from politics to peace". Upon his conversion, he said,

> All my plans, my Communistic ideas, my interest in politics, all fell to the ground. I immediately lost interest in everything worldly, and I never went back to those things.[198]

Finally, whilst whites held senior positions in the SABMS and the BBC, blacks were given neither regular access nor power within the white Baptist community.

In short, then, the dominant white Baptist tradition defined "mission" and "missionaries" in such a way that black Baptists never became equal partners in the work of mission.[199] On the contrary, black Baptists were rigorously separated from white Baptists at local, regional and national levels. This separation and control was both initiated and maintained by white Baptists. The consequence was an a-contextual form of mission that neither challenged the ideological commitments and self-preoccupation of white Baptists, nor permitted the expression of African cultural consciousness and identity. The SABMS repudiated the insights and contribution of the AICs and insisted that black Baptists adopt a Western and privatised theological praxis.

In conclusion, then, the white-dominated BU responded to their social context by verbally objecting to many of the economic and political policies of successive South African governments between 1892-1977. Simultaneously, however, the privatised theological perceptions and education of the BU precluded the development of a holistic and consistent application of their Christian faith to the social realities of South African existence.

The ideological captivity of the white BU tradition (engendered by their social position) was both reflected in, and reinforced by, their racially segregated structures and mission work. At local, regional and national levels, white and black Baptists were isolated from each other's social and ecclesiastical context. Black Baptists were excluded from full membership in the BU and prevented from enjoying the same status, power, and responsibilities as their white counterparts. Similarly, women were treated

---

198. The Sound of many voices (SABMS, 1965) pp 53-54.

199. Cf the SABMS report with the misleading title of A shared Purpose (1963) pp 17-29. African ministers were expected to conform to the BU models of church and mission.

very much like second class citizens in South African Baptist churches.[200]

Finally, the missionary policies and practices of the BU were such that blacks remained the objects of mission rather than becoming partners in mission. Consequently, an a-contextual approach to mission developed, in which white ideological commitments to segregation and white domination were not critiqued. This led to a denigration of African culture and to a callous indifference on the part of white Baptist churches to the daily humiliation and suffering experienced by black South Africans, including their "brothers and sisters in Christ".

In essence, the BU was incapable of effectively challenging the prejudiced attitudes and evil social structures engendered by segregation and white domination because of the inherent dualism of its theological praxis. In turn, trapped by the limitations of its own theology, the BU perpetuated in its own structures and missionary work these self-same patterns of white domination and black subjugation. Not surprisingly, this eventually led to the emergence of the various forms of black resistance discussed in the next chapter.

****

200. Cf the limited vision of "women's work" in A shared purpose (SABMS, 1963) pp 39-45.

CHAPTER 7

REACTION, REFORM OR RESISTANCE?

THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS BETWEEN 1978-1989.

The title of this chapter suggests that present-day Baptists have responded in three basic ways to the socio-religious challenges of the past few years. One group tends to be made up of those who have adopted a somewhat reactionary, right wing position. They are to be found within the South African Baptist Union but, following the political reforms initiated since February 1990, this group no longer enjoys the support (nor social legitimation) that it did during the State of Emergency.

A second group is made up of those seeking some type of reform. Whilst they have remained within the BU, they are critical of elements of the BU's past, as well as some of its present policies. They support the notion of reform, but are unwilling to espouse the more radical position taken by those who are actively resisting and opposing the privatised theological praxis of the Baptist Union.

The third group consists of those who have resisted the spiritualization, individualism, dualism, conformism, and white domination inherent in the dominant South African Baptist model outlined in this thesis. Such Baptists are represented in the Fellowship of Concerned Baptists (FCB) and the newly independent Baptist Convention of Southern Africa. They seek not merely the reform of Baptist structures and their own incorporation into these structures, but a radical re-structuring of the entire theological praxis of South African Baptists.

The existence of a fourth group must also be noted. This is the so-called "silent majority" which is unsure of its own views and is usually swayed by the views of the other three, more clearly identifiable, groups. Although the precise nature and extent of this fourth group is difficult to ascertain, its existence is not disputed.

The task of this chapter, then, is threefold : to outline the socio-political, economic, and ecclesiastical context within which Baptists operated between 1978-1989; to evaluate the responses of Baptists to this context as well as developments within the denomination; and to examine Baptist options for the future. To facilitate this analysis, the material contained in this chapter has been divided into two main sub-sections. The first deals with the cautious reforms of the BU between 1978 and 1984, the

second with the intensification of resistance between 1985-1989 (both within the country and within the BU itself).

A. 1978-1984 : THE BAPTIST UNION CAUTIOUSLY REFORMS : TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE.

The years 1978-1984 were dominated by the aftermath of the Soweto protest and, later, the establishment of the Tri-cameral Parliament. School boycotts, worker strikes, police repression, talk of reform, and growing political resistance were constantly in the news. Within Baptist circles, the Denominational Work Review commenced its activities in 1978. But few real changes ensued in terms of the BU's conception of the Gospel and Christian mission or of its practice of racism, inequality and white domination. The Centenary celebrations of 1977 did not produce a radical overview of the BU's past nor a new vision for the future.

1. The socio-religious context and Baptist responses.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, the dominant, Western models of theology were being challenged by African, Black, and Liberation Theologies across the world. By the late 1970's, they were becoming increasingly influential in South Africa, especially within the black Christian community. Discussion of issues such as : the relationship between Christianity and African culture and traditional religion; Black Theology, Black Consciousness and Black Liberation; the liberation of the poor; the social function of the Church; and biblical hermeneutics were increasingly associated with the growing resistance to the heinous system of Apartheid. It was during this period that A Boesak's Farewell to Innocence : A Socio-Ethical study of Black Theology and Black Power was published.[1] A number of important articles were also published by Desmond Tutu, Manas Buthelezi, Sam Buti, Sigqibo Dwane, Bonganjalo Goba, Simon Maimela, Itumeleng Mosala, Jabulani Nxumalo, Gabriel Setiloane, etc.[2]

Also significant was the fact that increasing numbers of black Christians played leading roles in organisations such as the SACC as well as

---

1. First published by J V Kok in the Netherlands (1976), it was published locally by Ravan Press in 1977.

2. See L Kretzschmar, The Voice of Black Theology in South Africa (Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1986) and J N J Kritzinger, "Black Theology : Challenge to Mission" (DTh, UNISA, 1988).

within their respective denominations. This religiously inspired resistance provoked the State to attempt to silence these individuals and organizations. Thus, in 1981, the Steyn Commission of Inquiry into the Mass Media was appointed and, in 1983, the Eloff Commissions investigated the activities of the SACC on behalf of the government.[3]

Central to all of this were the questions : what is the Gospel, what should the relationship be between Church and State, and how must the Bible be interpreted and applied? According to African, Black and Liberation Theologies, Christianity was certainly not limited to the personal, spiritual concerns of the individual. It was relevant also to socio-political, cultural and economic conditions within South Africa. But, in the application of the Christian Gospel to such social and personal realities, the influence of one's world view and one's position in society (ie ideological influences) had to be taken into account. The message of the Bible could not simply be "applied" to the situation, since there were different understandings of what constituted both "the message of the Bible" and "the South African situation".

What, one might ask, was the Baptist response to these developments? Sadly, it appears that there was no direct response since Baptists were seemingly unaware of or, perhaps, uninterested in this debate concerning the meaning of the Christian Gospel within the South African context. Thus, they continued on their now well-established privatised course.

During this period, the Christian Education Department offered training courses in being a door steward, family enrichment and church growth.[4] Rather than seeking to relate to the theological debate within the country, Baptists were far more influenced by earlier, European and North American discussions concerning the Liberal - Conservative debates which gave rise to the conflict over biblical inerrancy. South African Baptists were intellectually engaged in the controversies that ensued from the debates concerning the Social Gospel, liberal theology, and biblical criticism in the USA during the first half of the 20th century.[5] At the 1980 Baptist Union

---

3. See Villa-Vicencio, "Theology in the service of the State : the Steyn and Eloff Commissions" IN (eds) J de Gruchy & C Villa-Vicencio, Resistance and Hope, pp 112-125.

4. SABH 1980-81, p 94.

5. See D Bosch, "In search of a new Evangelical understanding" IN (ed) B Nicholls, In Word and Deed (Exeter : Lausanne Committee & Paternoster, 1985) pp 68-76.

Assembly, for example, Rev Poorter delivered a devotional paper on the topic of biblical inerrancy.[6] The BU was, seemingly, more interested in the debates issuing from conservative Evangelical circles overseas than it was with the socio-religious issues emerging within its own context, or that of Third World Evangelicalism.[7]

South African Baptists were also disturbed about the rise of Charismatic Christians within their churches and took steps to prevent Baptist properties being "taken over" by such groups. A new clause was added to church constitutions concerning the "submission of differences" to the Assembly in 1979 and this was later followed up by a set of guidelines concerning Baptist principles.[8]

In 1980, the "Human Relations Committee" of the BU prepared a booklet entitled "The Bible speaks on Race" but reported that "the response of the churches has been poor".[9] A year later, it "regretfully" admitted "that racial prejudice is still very prevalent among the people of God", and argued that this was due to a "lack of understanding or even misunderstanding of each other's culture."[10] What was missing from these analyses was a consciousness that racism was deeply embedded in the very structure of South African society and the theological praxis of the Baptist churches.

Even at the Baptist Theological Colleges, little attention was given to the theological debate within the country. The College in Parktown, under the Principalship of Rev Rex Mathie, prided itself for its "evangelical fervour, theological conservatism and high academic standard".[11] Despite claiming to train ministers for work within the "South African Baptist context" this College did not offer courses in Ethics or Missiology that

---

6. SABH 1980-81, p 198. As late as 1989, the inerrancy issue was still being debated, cf Baptists Today (Sept 1989) p 10.

7. See D S Walker, "Radical Evangelicalism and the Poor : A Challenge to aspects of Evangelical Theology in the South African context" (University of Natal, PhD, 1990) pp 22-48.

8. SABH 1979-80, p 208 and SABH 1988-89, p 164 ff. Cf also C Wassenaar, "Die trek-en-stoot faktore wat 'n rol speel by die aansluiting van lidmate by die Hatfield Baptiste Kerk." (University of Pretoria: MA, 1981).

9. SABH 1980-81, p 96.

10. SABH 1981-1982, p 96. See also SABH 1981-1982, p 176 and SABH 1983-1984, p 109.

11. See the Parktown College Prospectus (1978) p 2.

included the social dimension of these subjects. Out of over 100 theses produced by the students of this College up to 1990, only six dealt with subjects directly related to the Christian faith within the South African situation. Furthermore, the annual College reports to the Assembly did not even mention the rise (or implications) of African, Black and Liberation theologies.[12] It appears that, as a result of its location in a "Coloured" area and the theology of its principal, Rev Peter Holness, the Western Province College was not as closely tied to conservative Evangelicalism as was the Parktown College.[13] Doubtless, its more racially mixed student component was also a vital factor in the formation of its less conservative character. Nevertheless, at neither of these Colleges did South African Church History, Social Ethics or Contextual Theology specifically form part of the syllabus.

Similarly, at BBI in Debe Nek, a privatised understanding of the Christian faith determined the substance of the courses. This is borne out by the testimony of black Baptist ministers who were students at BBI.[14] As late as 1990, I was asked by the new (American) principal to suggest a number of books and journals that concentrated on contextual theological themes for the library at the College (previously the BBI, now the Baptist International Theological Seminary, BITS). Even the larger Parktown College library contained only a few titles written by South Africans and practically nothing written by black South African theologians.

In other words, whilst some South African Christians were vigorously debating how Christians should respond to their South African context, such issues were not reflected in the theological education offered at Baptist Colleges. Nor was there any specific, let alone extended, discussion of these developments at the Baptist Assemblies. Baptist theological perceptions remained tied to Western theological models and were, in addition, abstract, conservative and privatised in their emphasis.

After this brief examination of the context within which Baptists lived during the period 1978-1984, as well as their responses to this context, attention can now be given to developments within the Baptist Union itself.

---

12. Eg SABH 1984-85, p 103-106.

13. SABH 1986-87, p 106.

14. Cf Mhlophe, Barkly West, p 54.

2. The 1978 BU Denominational Work Review and its implications for Baptist Mission.

In 1978, the Denominational Work Review commenced its analysis of Baptist Union structures. The aim of this exercise was to re-structure the Baptist Union so as to ensure more meaningful participation and co-operation within the territorial, ethnic and linguistic associations.[15] Under this new policy of "devolution", the BU leadership sought to give new responsibilities to the Territorial Associations. These responsibilities included the co-ordination of church ministries in various areas and the incorporation of the work of the (missionary) field committees.[16] It was also proposed that the SABMS and certain BU Departments be integrated into a new structure entitled : the Baptist Missions Department (BMD). Various Baptist Departments (eg the Youth and Evangelism Departments) were to become National Councils. However, according to the draft Constitution (tabled in 1978) and the revised Constitution (tabled in 1979), the General Associations (eg the BWA), the Territorial Associations (eg the Border, Central and Natal Baptist Associations), and the Special Associations (eg the Baptist Convention and ABK) were all retained.[17] In addition, the definition of the term "church" still included the phrase "in membership with the Union", thus effectively excluding all those black churches that were not in direct membership of the BU (ie those which held Associational status only). Finally, this new Constitution included the previous "Declarations of Principle" and "Objects of the Union" virtually unchanged. In short, this re-structuring of the BU Constitution involved nothing radically new. It was neither an effective nor a relevant response to the situation in the country or to the growing discontent within Baptist ranks.

What, then, was the outworking of this new policy of devolution? Renewed efforts were made to encourage Convention churches to apply for Union membership and attempts were made, for example in the Natal region, to link black and white churches into a single territorial association.[18] Rev Grunewald, the Border Baptist Association's Area Co-ordinator (Missionary),

---

15. SABH 1978-79, p 75.

16. SABH 1979-80, pp 76 & 81.

17. See SABH 1978-79, p 195ff and SABH 1979-80, p 205 and the Denominational Work Review (1978) 12pp.

18. Cf SABH 1979-80, p 213 and SABH 1980-81, p 109.

made an effort to help black Baptists in a church building programme.[19] Contrary to earlier practice, a black church (in Mbabatho) received financial assistance from the "home missions" fund which had previously concentrated on the building of white Baptist churches.[20] A final example of the effects of this new policy was that the Central Baptist Association (Kimberley area) decided to remove the word "European" from its membership clause.[21]

During the next few years, strenuous efforts were made to fully implement the aims of the policy of devolution.[22] But it contained several inherent flaws and was not fully accepted by black Baptists.

The first and most obvious flaw has already been alluded to, namely, the fact that the racial, cultural, and linguistic Associational divisions were retained. This meant that the members of the committee responsible for the Work Review had neither related their denominational re-structuring to the social realities of the South African situation, nor addressed long-standing grievances within the Baptist Convention. One example of the continuing inequalities was that whilst the average salary of black Baptist ministers in Ciskei amounted to R90 per month, the monthly contribution of a white minister to the BU Pension scheme increased to R96.[23] Consequently, the results of the BU's Denominational Review Committee were extremely disappointing for the Convention because it retained the divisive linguistic, cultural and ethnic structures.[24] Thus, the Territorial Associations were essentially conceived of as including the white churches and the missionaries.[25] Black churches, it was implied, would slowly be assimilated into this new structure. In short, like the government of the day, the Baptist Union was engaged in a cautious, ineffectual and superficial type of reform.

---

19. See SABH 1981-1982, p 82 and SABH 1984-85, p 90. A building programme was also initiated in Natal (SABH 1981-1982, p 84).

20. SABH 1982-83, p 112.

21. SABH 1979-80, p 81.

22. Refer to SABH 1980-81, p 204-05; SABH 1985-86, p 85; and SABH 1986-87, p 182.

23. SABH 1980-81, p 109 & SABH 1980-81, p 207.

24. Makhanya, Barkly West, p 37.

25. SABH 1979-80, p 209ff.

A second fundamental weakness of the Denominational Work Review was that it adopted a "top-down" approach. Its policies were not the result of widespread consultations with the Convention churches, even though the decision to alter the structure and emphasis of the SABMS affected them more than anyone else.[26] The fact is that this policy was conceived of within the Union and then presented to the Convention churches, an approach which caused considerable confusion.[27]

A third flaw in the new policy was that mission was still thought of as synonymous with evangelism, although the emphasis was now placed on world evangelism.[28] Arguably, this international emphasis was a smokescreen to hide the increasing resistance experienced by white Baptist missionaries, especially from the black youth. Rather than dealing with the roots of this resistance, the SABMS was disbanded without adequate consultation with the Convention as to future relations between black and white Baptists, the nature of mission, or the situation in the country. In short, the BU's "new mission policy" evidenced nothing new in terms of either the content or the method of mission.[29] As reported by the SABMS, the vision of the 1892 establishment of this society was as clear as ever : "To disseminate the gospel of Jesus Christ among, and to promote the evangelisation of, the Non-European people of Southern Africa."[30]

Arguably, the very limitations of this proposed re-structuring of the BU show how unaware the BU leadership was of how resentment and resistance were building up within the Convention. Furthermore, if blacks had been properly consulted at this stage, the "merger" talks of the mid 1980's would not have been necessary, let alone doomed to failure.

The fact that this re-structuring attempt had not addressed the real issues within the Baptist Convention was revealed in the growing resistance to white missionaries within the Convention. Up until 1978, the white missionaries had been full members of the Convention. But, as a result of BU policy changes these "area co-ordinators" (as they were now termed) could

---

26. The SABMS executive and the superintendents made the new policy decisions (SABH 1976-77, p 107).

27. SABH 1980-81, p 116 and SABH 1983-84, p 111.

28. SABH 1980-81, p 199. At the most the BU envisages a twofold task : evangelism and teaching; cf SABH 1978-79, pp 99 and 200.

29. SABH 1981-82, p 178.

30. SABH 1980-81, p 105.

no longer be appointed to the Convention Executive because the Convention's Constitution made no reference to "co-ordinators" but only to "missionaries". At the 1982 Convention Assembly in Attridgeville, the Baptist Convention leaders made full use of this technicality and asked the white co-ordinators present to absent themselves from the Executive's meetings. Although this drew "sharp reactions" from several quarters, it was felt to be necessary because the white missionaries' presence in the life of the Convention had a "paralysing effect" on the Convention in the areas of leadership, administration, financial dependance, theological standards, and policy.(31) At the next Convention Assembly (1984), the Assembly was conducted entirely independently of white leadership.

3. The secession of the Transkei Baptist Union (TBU).

One final example of the growing resistance amongst black Baptists under the umbrella of the BU was the breakaway of the Transkei Baptist Union in 1982. The actual causes of this breakaway are difficult to determine since widely differing versions are given by the leaders of the white and Transkeian Baptist Unions.

In 1976, the same year that the Transkei became supposedly "independent", it was suggested that

> ... 'the churches which are Xhosa speaking should become a part of the Transkei Association and those on the Natal Coast which are Zulu speaking should become part of the Natal Association."(32)

It was further reported in the BU Handbook that negotiations were proceeding with the Pondoland, Transkei and Natal churches. In 1978, it was reported "after a long discussion" it was decided that Pondoland East would join the Transkei Association.(33) However, the ostensible reason given in the Handbooks for these structural changes, namely that of language, cannot possibly have been the real reason since the actual languages spoken in these regions (Xhosa and Zulu) had not changed. The only thing that had changed was that the South African government had decided that Transkei was to be the first of the "Independent Homeland States". According to Rev Nkuhlu, the current President of the Transkei Baptist Union, there were many reasons for this breakaway. But the immediate cause was that the churches in the

---

31. Makhanya, Barkly West, p 36.

32. SABH 1976-77, p 107.

33. SABH 1978-79, p 108.

Transkei and E Pondoland regions were extremely unhappy with the way in which the Union officials sought to duplicate the South African government's political and geographical divisions in the structure of the SABMS.[34] Before 1976, the Xhosa-speaking Pondo people had been part of the Natal (missionary) field, but after the Transkei had been declared independent in 1976, the E Pondoland area was transferred into the Transkei Association. In addition, the Queenstown circuit (originally part of the Transkei region) was incorporated into the Ciskei region, but Ezibeleni, the black township near Queenstown, was allocated to the Transkei region. Baptists within the Transkei, Rev Nkuhlu said, objected to all this, but they were not heard.

Even within the official BU Handbook, there were indications that all was not well because, in 1979, it was reported that there was some "conflict" at the church at Ezibeleni.[35] Nevertheless, the process of reorganisation continued and it was reported in the BU Handbook that a new Constitution had been adopted and that the TBU was to be inaugurated in June 1980.[36] On the surface, all seemed to be progressing smoothly, but by 1982, the Transkei Baptist Union had broken away and formed an independent and autonomous body. Why did this happen?

One immediate cause of the secession, namely, the dissatisfaction about the re-division of church and mission regions, has already been mentioned. A further cause was the refusal of the BU to accede to the desire of the TBU to merge with the Union.[37] Rev Nkuhlu said :

> In 1980-81 we asked whether we could be linked to them, they said "no", it was not permitted by their Constitution. This Constitution of theirs has become an idol. It has since also caused problems between the Union and the Convention.

Rev Nkuhlu went on to say :

> The Union wanted the Transkei to become an Association of the Union. But we knew that this would be a meaningless thing. We wanted to have an identity, to be equal to others within the Union. Instead we were treated like children. Our complaints and views were ignored. For this reason we withdrew and became an autonomous group. We had to think of our children, as things

---

34. The information included in this section was obtained in an interview with Rev W Nkuhlu.

35. SABH 1979-80, p 116.

36. SABH 1980-81, pp 117 & 87. The TBU was formed in the following year : see SA Baptist (Aug 1980), p 23 and SABH 1981-1982, p 86.

37. The BU wanted the TBU to be "in association with" BU alongside the other Associations, SABH 1979-80, p 116.

> were we really had no church. We had to give our children a church, this is why we took the step that we did.

It would seem that the relevant BU officials regarded the TBU as yet another Association of the Union, existing alongside the other Associations such as the Convention. But, as has been shown in the previous chapter, the African churches in these regions had experienced years of being marginalised, and of being informed, after the event, about decisions taken on their behalf by others. They had also long been dissatisfied with the system of superintendents, and the patent disunity and racism inherent in the structures and attitudes of the Baptist Union. All of these form the background to the secession of the TBU for, as Rev Nkuhlu said concerning the possibilities of re-unification :

> Unless they stop their paternalism, we will not go back. Even children in a family are treated better than we were. If our children come to us with a complaint, we listen and try to do something. They did not even do this. We have experienced rejection too often.

The story of the secession of the TBU is a complex one, but what is clear is that there was no real communication between the various participants in this drama. As is shown in the next section with regard to the "merger" talks between the Convention and the Baptist Union, people were "talking past" each other. The Transkeians felt that they were speaking out but they were not being heard. This dissatisfaction is not reflected in the relevant BU documents, which suggests that either the BU representatives were not aware of the resistance to their plans or that they suppressed this information in their official reports to the members of the BU Assembly. In 1986, the BU grant to the TBU expired, leaving these historic Baptist mission churches in dire financial straits.[38]

The period between 1978 and 1984, then, was characterised by tentative and unrealistic <u>reform</u> on the one hand and by an emerging <u>resistance</u> to paternalism and privatization on the other hand. Resistance to missionary control as well as unjust and exclusivist white Baptist attitudes and structures was evidenced in the Convention's action of excluding missionaries from their Executive and by the breakaway of the Transkei Baptist Union.

---

38. SABH 1986-87, p 91

B. 1985-1989 : THE INTENSIFICATION OF RESISTANCE.

The years between 1985 and 1989 were fraught with conflict. Resistance to Apartheid in general, and to particular manifestations of it such as the Tri-cameral system, intensified. During the State of Emergency, the State security system unleashed new levels of repressive violence upon those who sought to resist the injustices of Apartheid. In response, many Christians issued a "Call to Prayer for the end of Unjust Rule" in June 1985; the United Democratic Front (UDF) was founded; calls were issued for sanctions to be exercised against South Africa; the WCC Lusaka statement was issued in May 1987; and the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) was formed in 1990.(39)

Many of the leading opponents of Apartheid, such as D Tutu, F Chikane, B Naudé, A Boesak, and D Hurley, were drawn from the Christian community. They led this resistance because of their Christian convictions and because of the leadership vacuum created by the government's repressive policies. Consequently, the supposed divide between secular politics and religious faith became virtually indistinguishable. Despite vigorous denials to the contrary, the state itself, as well as the right-wing religious groups that flourished during this period, were intensely involved in the religio-political debate, albeit from the other side of the spectrum.

1. A context of religious resistance.

It was not by accident that a series of books which dealt specifically with the growing conflict within the country (of which only a few are mentioned below) emerged during this period.

Charles Villa-Vicencio and John de Gruchy of the University of Cape Town jointly edited Apartheid is a Heresy and Resistance and Hope : South African Essays in honour of Beyers Naudé.(40) In 1986, Itumeleng Mosala and Buti Tlhagale edited both The Unquestionable Right to be Free : Essays in Black Theology and Hammering Swords into Ploughshares : Essays in honour of Mpilo Desmond Tutu.(41) Villa-Vicencio also published Between Christ and Caesar: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Church and State in 1986, Theology and

---

39. See Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid, pp 115-170. For a critique of privatization and false piety see J de Gruchy, "Prayer, politics and false piety" IN (eds) A Boesak and C Villa-Vicencio, A Call for an end to Unjust Rule (Edinburgh : St Andrew's Press, 1986) pp 97-112.

40. Published in Cape Town, by David Philip, in 1983 & 1985.

41. Both published in Johannesburg by Skotaville in 1986.

Violence : the South African Debate in 1987 and Trapped in Apartheid in 1988.[42] James Cochrane published his Servants of Power in 1987, whilst Albert Nolan published God in South Africa in 1988.[43] During the same period, a host of articles appeared in a variety of academic journals, para-church organizations' newsletters, church newspapers and magazines, representing a variety of viewpoints regarding the role of the church within the country.

Arguably, the leaders and members of the SACC and ICT spear-headed the "religious" resistance to the Apartheid system. Through public meetings and conferences, books, pamphlets, newsletters, staff efforts, funeral services, etc, they sought to mobilise people to oppose the system which had for nearly 40 years held South Africans captive.

In addition to the efforts of the SACC and ICT, several documents emerged during this period as a testimony of individual Christians, and like-minded groups of believers, as to why they regarded it as nothing less than the duty of Christians to oppose a regime that was inherently unjust, corrupt, illegitimate and even demonic. These included the very influential Kairos Document (1985) as well as others such as the Evangelical Witness in South Africa (EWISA, 1986) and A Relevant Pentecostal Witness (1987). Documents such as these were intensely critical of the State because it had used the Christian faith to legitimate its unjust policies and exploitative practices. The Kairos Document put it like this :

> The oppressive South African regime will always be particularly abhorrent to Christians precisely because it makes use of Christianity to justify its evil ways... 'State theology' is not only heretical, it is blasphemous.[44]

Further, these documents were critical of those forms of Christianity which claimed to be politically neutral whilst, in fact, they supported the state either actively or by default. Thus, A Relevant Pentecostal Witness confessed :

> When we examine ourselves, we find that we have not borne a true testimony that Apartheid is ungodly and unchristian. Rather, we

---

42. Respectively published in Cape Town by David Philip in 1986, in Johannesburg by Skotaville in 1987, and in Cape Town by David Philip in 1988.

43. Published in Johannesburg by Ravan in 1987 and in Cape Town by David Philip in 1988.

44. The Kairos Document (1985) p 7.

> have helped to feed and nourish it to grow and be the monster that it is today.[45]

Finally, they called upon the churches in South Africa to engage in a prophetic, confrontational, and active ministry of opposing evil and promoting justice in all the spheres of life in South Africa.[46]

A crucial aspect of these documents, as well as of the work of the SACC and the ICT, was a commitment to Contextual Theology. As pointed out in chapter two, a central tenet of Contextual Theology is that all theology, whether it recognises it or not, is contextual. This means that theologians and churches inevitably respond to some or other context. This response should, however, be one which is consciously made, because the more aware the Church is of its context, the more it will be able to resist the social power of group interests, and the tendency of such groups to use the Gospel to legitimate their own interests.[47]

Contextual Theology is further opposed to a type of theology that is universal and abstract rather than particular and practical. This is not a denial of central Christian truths such as "Christ is the Saviour", but it is an assertion that unless such beliefs are manifested in a concrete way, they indicate neither obedience to God nor love for humanity. What has been masquerading, then, as a universally valid expression of the Gospel has actually been theology as it is conceived by white, Western, male theologians.

It is because of this negative legacy that Contextual theologians insist on the importance of social analysis; that the historical roots and structural nature of our society require close investigation. Those engaging in theology are compelled to state their perception of "the context" as well as their particular agenda openly so that these presuppositions thereby become part of the debate rather than subtly, and often disastrously, determining the debate. Following on from this, praxis is practice or action that is subject to critical reflection. It is not an undirected or unconscious process, but an activity that is based on critical reflection.

---

45. A Relevant Pentecostal Witness, p 2; cf EWISA, pp 21-35.

46. The Kairos Document, p 15, and EWISA, pp 36-39.

47. J de Gruchy, Theology and Ministry in Context and Crisis (London : Collins, 1986) - hereafter Theology and Ministry, p 38.

This reflection is, in turn, itself re-evaluated in the light of concrete experience.[48]

How, then, did South African Baptists respond to this theological debate? During the years 1985-1989, at least three basic responses can be discerned : right wing reactions; BU reforms; and the resistance of the Convention and the FCB.[49]

1. Baptist Right Wing Reactions.

An important reaction to the social and theological developments in the country between 1985 and 1989 was that which emerged from "right wing" religious groups. Right wing groups are characterised by their acceptance of the status quo within the country, their unqualified support for the government, and the restriction of the Gospel to personal, spiritual needs. Significantly, despite their very definite political views, such groups were unable (or unwilling) to admit that their religious affirmations served to legitimate their conservative political allegiances.[50]

Although it is difficult to estimate the extent of the support of right wing groups within the BU, they exerted an influence over a long period. For example, articles and letters appeared in Baptist newspapers reflecting the views of individuals like Francis Grim during the early 1980's.[51] Baptist newspapers and Handbooks also reported on the activities of Peter Hammond and the Frontline Fellowship in Zambia and Mozambique.[52] Although the Baptist minister Rev Ed Cain had no formal connection with the BU, his magazine Signposts was sent out to Baptist ministers and members. After the 1985 George Assembly, (which sent a critical Memorandum to the State President), persons sympathetic with right wing groups indicated their rejection of such criticisms of the government :

---

48. J de Gruchy, Theology and Ministry, pp 88-89.

49. Cf also J Jonsson "The Faces of Baptists in South Africa : Baptists in socio-political life in South Africa" IN Not Benevolence but Atonement (Nilses Publication, 1987).

50. See Paul Gifford, The Religious Right in Southern Africa (Harare : Baobab & University of Zimbabwe, 1988) and the entire issue of JTSA 69 (Dec 1989).

51. SA Baptist (July 1981) pp 6-9; (Aug 1981) pp 13-14; (Sept 1981) 11-13; (Dec 1982) p 14. Baptists Today (Feb 1987) p 5.

52. SABH 1985-86, p 114; Baptists Today (Nov 1987) p 6 and (Feb 1988) p 5.

> It was clear from the action of the last Assembly, that a decision to embroil our denomination in politics was taken without the prior sanction of all our churches. Delegates voted as they saw fit, without the clear mandate of their churches, and they were probably swayed by the charisma of the political activists who had attended Assembly with the clear intention of dragging our denomination into politics."(53)

Another example that could be cited is a motion prepared by the Congella Baptiste Gemeentesentrum for discussion at the 1988 Assembly. This motion accused the Christian Citizenship Committee of being "political activists" who spoke the same language as the African National Congress and it moved that "... no political matters be discussed at Assembly at all."(54) Happily, this motion was not accepted and over 70% of the delegates indicated their continuing support for the work of the BU Executive and the CCC and, in particular, for their right to make representations to the government on behalf of the BU concerning "moral matters which touch on the area of politics".(55)

This action on the part of the BU delegates would seem to indicate that right wing groups do not have the support of the majority of Baptist leaders. Seemingly, white South African Baptists would fall more readily into the category of passive, conservative Evangelicals than active right wing supporters. Also, as a result of the recent political developments in South Africa, right wing groups no longer enjoy the support that they experienced during the period 1985-1989.

2. Baptist Union Reforms.

The BU leaders have long been proponents of a theology of "balance" and the "middle way", claiming to be both objective and neutral in their approach. Consequently, they have been critical of both the government and resistance movements. In effect, however, they have been neither neutral nor objective. Although acting under the guise of advocates of reform, they have largely conformed to their social context because they have been unaware of their own ideological commitments.

---

53. R A Gorven in a letter entitled "Baptists and Politics" (28 May 1986).

54. From the Documented Agenda prepared for the 1988 assembly, p 36.

55. SABH 1988-89, p 165 ff.

What, then, were the concerns and activities of Baptists within the BU between 1985-1989? For the most part, the BU continued with its policy of addressing resolutions to the government. For example, resolutions regarding black re-settlement, the Mixed Marriages Act, and discriminatory legislation were passed by BU Assemblies.[56] Baptists within the Union continued with works of philanthropy such as feeding schemes, welfare work and drought relief.[57] The efforts of some Baptists were more development-orientated, concentrating on the problems experienced by squatters and the homeless as a result of conflict, poverty and rapid urbanisation.[58] But these expressions of social concern were neither widespread nor well supported within the BU.

The BMD also continued with its a-contextual evangelistic efforts. For example, in its "Mine Hostel" ministry, evangelistic work was being done without attention being given to the socio-economic and political issues that directly affected the miners such as wages, working conditions, unions, violence, and migrant labour.[59] Even a BMD policy document produced in 1988 still stressed evangelism and church planting as "the primary function of mission work" and regarded "healing and education" as of secondary importance.[60] For the rest, Baptists within the Union pursued their individual and church orientated spirituality.

What, then, were Baptists within the BU failing to do? Within the BU, Christian faith and practice remained privatised, and these churches developed no plans actively to oppose, disobey or resist laws which their Assemblies condemned as unjust. Nor did they address themselves to the disunity and discrimination within the ranks of their own "Union" of churches.

---

56. SABH 1981-1982, p 176; SABH 1982-83, p 168; and SABH 1984-85, p 185. The CCC issued statements on a number of issues, eg conscientious objection, squatters and the banning of Beyers Naudé (SABH 1983-84, p 110). They also completed studies on the unrest in the country and religious objectors, (eg SABH 1986-87, p 114).

57. Eg SA Baptist (Oct 1985) p 28; Baptists Today (April 1987) p 4; and (May 1988) p 3.

58. SABH 1986-87, p 95; SABH 1988-89, p 96; SABH 1988-89, p 97.

59. SABH 1980-81, p 125-26; SABH 1985-86, p 114; Baptists Today (March 1987) p 5 and (Oct 1987) p 6.

60. Cf T D Pass, "BMD Document regarding Policy", p 7.

The BU's perception of reform did not include aligning itself with more radical groups; indeed, it often criticised them. For example, in response to developments initiated by the SACC, several articles and Assembly resolutions critical of the WCC and SACC emerged in the Baptists Today magazine.[61] A negative discussion on Liberation Theology also appeared.[62] White South African Baptists' suspicion of Liberation Theologies was further reflected in their response to the Kairos and EWISA documents, which differed markedly from the responses of Baptists overseas and as well as local black Baptist responses. Many Baptists outside South Africa welcomed the Kairos Document. For example, the Baptist World Alliance recommended the Kairos Document "for further study and other action".[63] In addition, Dr J Jonsson (a previous Principal of the Parktown Baptist College and at that time a Professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky) wrote :

> ...I wish to be identified with those who have attached their signatures to the Kairos Document... I regret that there are no other Baptist names attached to this important document."[64]

In South Africa, however, white Baptists delegates did not directly address or comment on the Kairos Document in their Assemblies of 1985 and 1986. Nor were the names of Baptists amongst the signatories of this document. In 1987, the Rev Jeffree James, often regarded as an unofficial spokesperson for the Baptist Union on socio-political affairs, had this to say regarding the Kairos Document :

> We are convinced that Kairos provides no answer to the South African situation which will ensure that justice and righteousness will prevail in our land. Indeed, by opting for revolution rather than reform it may well encourage forces both here and overseas whose objective is the establishment of a Marxist dictatorship.[65]

---

61. See SA Baptist (Sept 1976) pp 14-16; (Dec 1978) p 11; (Oct 1979) p 6; and Baptists Today (July 1988) p 9.

62. Baptists Today (July 1989) p 8, followed up by a letter critical of this article (Oct 1989) p 14.

63. ICT News, 4:3 (1986) p 11.

64. ICT News 5:1 (1987) p 2. See also his A Call for Liberation from State Theology (Nilses Publication, 1987).

65. J James, "That Kairos Document" (April 1986) p 6.

Rev Peter Holness, principal of the Western Province Baptist Theological College, did not take such an extreme view.(66) In his description of the Kairos Document he noted that it "highlights grave injustices in our country", that it "rightly stresses God's concern for social justice", and that "it reminds us that there is a social and political dimension to the gospel".(67) Despite such positive observations, he stated that it "poses a serious threat to evangelical Christianity" :

> It does not only offer an attractive theological option to those who are disadvantaged. It also represents a different way of "doing theology" which amounts to a drastic interpretation of historic Christianity. Liberation-style theology - let us make no bones about it - bears little resemblance to historical, evangelical Christianity. The creed of liberation theology is very different from the Nicene Creed.(68)

In short, the Baptist Union did not either officially or unofficially espouse the content or passionate concerns of the Kairos Document. On the contrary, those statements that did appear were largely critical of it. Only 9% of the respondents to my 1989 questionnaire said that, if asked, they would have signed the Kairos Document; whilst 25% would have signed the EWISA document.(69) Once again, white Baptists (like the majority of white Christians from other denominations) reflected the interests of their social group rather than the views of their black "brothers and sisters" in the Christian faith.

Even less attention was given to the EWISA document by the white members of the Baptist Union, despite the fact that this document directly sought to address those churches who considered themselves to be "evangelicals" and that the EWISA document was signed by several (mainly black) Baptists. It was this very ostrich-like indifference to the EWISA document that prompted a small group of interested delegates to meet separately during the 1986 BU Assembly to discuss the implications of this document for South African Baptist churches. The result was the formation

---

66. Holness' assessment appeared in three separate articles entitled : "Kairos : God's Kingdom or Man's?"; "Reacting to Kairos"; and "Weighed in the balances and found wanting".

67. "Reacting to Kairos" p 2.

68. Ibid, p 3. Significantly, the Nicene Creed is regarded as the standard of orthodoxy, even though it was addressing a social and philosophical context quite different from ours in South Africa today.

69. See the Appendix, Enclosure 6.

of the Fellowship of Concerned Baptists (FCB) which is discussed further below.

Why did members of the Baptist Union respond to the South African socio-religious crisis in this way? Several reasons can be cited.

a) Bound by a paradigm of social conformity and white self interest.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, South African Baptists had conformed to both colonialism and Apartheid. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that they mirrored the white fears, political conservativism, and belief in minor reforms that characterised the period 1985-1989. This political and theological conservativism was clearly reflected in their reactions to Conscientious Objection; the Violence/Non-violence debate; and in the responses of the BU delegates to the questionnaire conducted at the 1989 Assembly.

Several calls were issued by the SACC and the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) for white Christian men to refuse to be drafted into the South African Defence Force (SADF). The BU response reflected at least three basic approaches : those who had serious reservations about the SADF and supported conscientious objection; those who were supportive of the SADF; and those who argued that the decision must be made on the basis of individual conscience.[70]

The first of these approaches was not well supported. Individuals such as Peter Moll and Michael Viveiro paid a heavy price for their refusal to bear arms, but their example was not followed by many Baptists. Still, some information concerning opposition to the SADF on the basis of religious conviction was published.[71]

A second approach was that of tacit or active support for the SADF. For example, certain Baptist families were eager to show hospitality to servicemen and at least two articles were published on the subject of "how to prepare your son for National Service".[72] A Baptist chaplain gave

---

70. For more detail see P Steinegger, "A Historical investigation into the relationship between the South African Baptist Union and military conscription into the South African Defence Force" (Unpublished paper, 1990) 15pp.

71. SA Baptist (Dec 1982) p 13; Baptists Today (Oct 1989) p 13; (June 1988) p 4; and continued in (July 1988) p 10.

72. See SA Baptist (Nov 1980) pp 8-10 and (Dec 1985) pp 4-7.

advice to young men who were already in the army or about to enter it.[73] The cover of the October 1982 issue of Baptists Today featured a national serviceman reading a copy of this same magazine and this issue also reported the death of a Baptist whilst on patrol in the Caprivi.[74] Also, a letter was published which, amongst other things, stated that individual Baptists should not refer to or involve the denomination if they decided to opt for conscientious objection.[75] All of these articles and letters were supportive of those Baptists who were "willing to serve their country". Baptists Today also published several articles or news items concerning Baptists serving as military chaplains. For example, promotions and citations received by Brigadier A van den Aardweg were reported. Additional information about Baptist chaplains, including photographs of them in military uniforms, was also published.[76]

The third approach represented the official line taken by the BU, namely, that the decision should be left to the conscience of the individual. Thus, although the BU did make many representations to the government recommending that reforms be made to the Defence Act, and published much useful information concerning conscription, they did not directly advise conscientious objection.[77]

All three of these viewpoints were represented in the results of the questionnaire conducted at the 1989 BU Assembly, in which the respondents were invited to indicate their reactions to a number of statements. Only 1% disagreed "entirely with military service and chaplaincy", and 37% had "reservations about military chaplaincy and Christians doing military service" within the SADF. In contrast, 48% of the respondents indicated that they "wholeheartedly support military service and agree with the way in which the military chaplaincy presently operates", whilst 15% said that they "regard criticisms of the Defence force and conscription as part of a

---

73. Baptists Today (June 1982) pp 4-5.

74. Baptists Today (Oct 1982) p 14.

75. Baptists Today (April 1982) p 13.

76. Cf Baptist Today (July 1983) p 21 and (May 1987) p 3; and (Oct 1983) pp 4-6 and (May 1988) p 11. The Baptist SADF chaplains were still fully supported SABH 1985-86, p 109.

77. SA Baptist (Nov 1979) p 17; (May 1982) pp 11-12. Cf also a useful article prepared by P Holness of the CCC Baptists Today (July 1989) p 9.

Communist plot to weaken South Africa". Finally, 58% took the stance that "Christians should be given the option of alternative service".(78)

It is noticeable that few of the BU delegates were prepared to take a definite moral stand concerning the activities of the SADF during this time. Unlike the SACC's Hammanskraal resolutions, little criticism of the SADF or of the roles played by the chaplains (eg in providing the SADF with religious legitimation) was expressed by the BU. Moreover, black Baptists were not consulted about their views and experiences concerning the activities of the SADF on the "border" or in the townships. As usual, white Baptists made full use of the Baptist principle of "individual conscience" which meant, given the social conformity of the denomination, that the consciences of individual white Baptists simply succumbed to the social context in which they lived. Again, their concern for "balance" resulted in no action being taken by the denomination on the basis of socio-ethical principles.

Similarly, concerning the heated debate and sufferings that resulted from ongoing violence, the BU condemned violence at its George Assembly, as well as certain police actions and unjust laws. They also sent a memorandum to P W Botha.(79) But it did not include a proper analysis of why some people resorted to violence, and it simplistically condemned the use of violence "either to uphold the status quo or to bring about change".(80)

A final example of the political conservativism and social naiveté of the BU was revealed in the respondents' replies to those aspects of the questionnaire dealing with social ethics. 38% boldly declared that the church "should have nothing to do with politics" but rather concentrate on "spiritual matters such as evangelism, church growth and the Christian family". Of the 56% that believed that the church has "political responsibilities", 73% maintained a reformist position, stating that "the church should consistently speak out against discrimination and injustice and seek to make its objections clear to those in authority". Only 23% (of the 56%) said that the church must "actively resist oppression" even if this led to "civil disobedience".(81)

---

78. See the Appendix, Enclosure 6.

79. SABH 1985-86, p 169ff (the vote was : 156 for, 54 against, 13 abstentions).

80. SABH 1988-89, p 167.

81. See the Appendix, Enclosure 6.

b) The privatised history and theological education of the BU.

Another reason for the BU's reformist position was that its long history of privatization did not equip Baptist leaders to respond adequately to the crisis in the country. As indicated in the questionnaire, 48% of the respondents defined sin as "an evil which is committed by persons in rebellion against God..." whilst
60% said that salvation meant "to be justified in God's sight, to be reconciled to God and to other people, and to seek to proclaim this reconciliation to the world". Thus, half of the BU delegates shied away from the view that sin was "embodied in the exploitative political and economic structures of our society". And more than half did not agree that salvation, in addition to its individual application, also required Christians "to actively strive to establish God's justice, peace and liberation within the structures of society". 19% defined the church's mission as "to save as many souls as possible and to prepare them for a future in heaven", whereas 49% saw mission as the proclaiming of "God's salvation to lost, sick and fallen individuals who will, as a natural consequence, improve the world in which we live". If views such as these were held by the leaders of the Baptist churches, how much more limited was the vision of the ordinary members who were largely dependent on their pastors for their theological perceptions?(82)

The BU was also hampered by the limited vision of its Theological Colleges. For example, Rev Mathie aimed to make Parktown an academically credible Pastor's College. But none of the Baptist Colleges trained pastors who could help their members make a contribution to the vast social needs of the country's people.(83) These Colleges provided their students with a steady diet of books and doctrinal formulations that were better suited to the American and European contexts within which they were written. In addition, because the teachings of these Western theologians were perceived to be "the truth", Baptist pastors were not being trained to relate the Christian faith to the entire South African context.

The attempt to develop a universally valid theology is not only an impossibility; it is also a potentially destructive exercise. Because it

---

82. See the Appendix, Enclosure 6. This questionnaire also revealed that the majority of the BU pastors have been trained at the BU Colleges, and that very few of the lay members have any formal theological education.

83. SABH 1985-86, p 174 and Baptists Today (Oct 1989) p 12.

claims to be a universally valid (and biblically-based) theology, it cannot easily be challenged or changed. As the privatised theology propagated by the Baptist Union was considered to be "the Gospel of Jesus Christ", anyone who questioned it was regarded as either some sort of agitator or someone who did not understand the "true Gospel". Consequently, Baptist theology became rigid and irrelevant; it ignored the context, suffering, and perception of thousands of its members. It became inextricably linked to white self-interest, and the needs of blacks and women, in particular, were simply ignored.

These narrow and a-contextual theological trends were reinforced by the influence of conservative elements within the American Southern Baptist Convention.[84] Personnel from the SBC were involved in mission, Christian education, and theological training.[85] They were also active on the Evangelism Committee of the BU, Sunday School planning, church growth seminars, and at the Seminarium of the ABK.[86] Finally, they gave many seminars using the Master Life Course developed in the USA (which included little on social issues and nothing directly related to the South African situation).[87]

Because the SBC's Foreign Mission Board followed a policy that required its "missionaries to maintain a stance of political neutrality within their host countries", said Ken Perkins, they reinforced the BU's perception of mission as evangelism and church planting only.[88] Nor did the policies and practices of the SBC missionaries encourage the BU to question its perception that it was "politically neutral". Perkins also argued that :

> The Southern Baptists are still in need of confessing in repentance, and coming to grips with, their racial prejudice. The track record of Southern Baptists is less than enviable in regard to American civil rights, feeding the hungry and homeless,

---

84. The strong influence of fundamentalists dates as least from 1979; for some recent examples of their predominance in the SBC see The Christian Century (May 16-23, 1990) pp 517-518; (July 27 - June 4, 1990) p 621.

85. SABH 1979-80, p 76; SABH 1979-80, p 95; SABH 1979-80, pp 97 & 215.

86. SABH 1986-87, p 179; SABH 1987-88, pp 104, 106; SABH 1988-89, pp 93, 103 & 108.

87. Cf SABH 1984-85, p 116; SABH 1985-86, pp 88, 108; SABH 1986-87, pp 108, 112, 117; and SABH 1987-88, p 109.

88. Kenneth O Perkins, "A socio-political orientation model for Southern Baptist Missionaries in Transkei, Southern Africa" (Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville : D Min, 1990) pp 5 and ff. See also pp 21-33.

> and insisting upon social and economic justice within the United States.[89]

It is also significant that, as late as 1981, the black membership of the SBC was only 2%.[90] How could this group help white South African Baptists deal with their own racism and their support (tacit or active) for an injust social system and a white-dominated denomination?

Finally, because the BU's Theological Colleges remained largely segregated, and critical black Baptist perspectives were neither encouraged nor heard, the BU simply continued to reflect the interests of its white minority.

c) The Leadership of the BU.

The reformist stance of the BU was not questioned because its leaders continued to follow a "middle of the road" policy.[91] This meant that no decisive stand was taken on controversial matters. The BU was an extremely diverse body, and the leadership did not wish to give reason for further secessions to take place amongst the white churches.[92] Further, the BU's emphasis on local church autonomy meant that the powers of the BU Executive were very limited. In effect, then, congregational autonomy meant that the Baptist witness was confined to the limited vision of the largely self-preoccupied local churches.

Cognisance should also be taken of the fact that the BU and the BMD (previously the SABMS) Executives operated as an oligarchy; certain persons held key leadership positions for many years. Rev Trevor Swart, for example, was the General Secretary of the BU for nearly 20 years.[93] It is for this reason that the BU leadership (in complete contradiction to the Baptist principle of "congregational government") more closely resembled an "old boy's club" than a body that genuinely reflected the real nature of its

---

89. Ibid, p 52.

90. E L Wheeler, "An overview of Black Southern Baptist involvements" Bapt H & H 16:3 (July 1981) p 11.

91. Baptists Today (Aug 1988) p 2 and (Oct 1988) p 2.

92. Some "Charismatic" churches had already broken away from the BU and certain "Reformed Baptists" threatened to do the same.

93. In 1983, Rev Swart had been General Secretary for 10 years (SABH 1983-84, p 173). (At the 1991 Assembly, Rev Swart indicated his imminent resignation).

membership, predominantly black and/or female. For this reason, the few lonely voices which sought to move the BU towards a more holistic theology and a more meaningful social and ecclesiastical outworking of its Christian faith were virtually ignored.[94]

d) The role played by Baptists elsewhere in the world.

The BU was able to continue to operate within a paradigm of white domination because, for over 100 years, the BU had been supported, or at least seldom seriously criticised, by Baptists overseas. White South Africans were welcomed at the meetings of the Baptist World Alliance, where they officially represented the thousands of black Baptists who had minimal representation in the structures of the BU. In addition, World Alliance representatives as well as Baptist missionaries continued to come to South Africa.[95] As Gideon Makhanya later put it : "... the Apartheid situation within the Baptist Union was well camouflaged."[96] Only since the late 1980's have black Baptists had meaningful contact with Baptists overseas or elsewhere in Africa.

Baptist visitors to South Africa responded in different ways to the local Baptist situation.[97] In 1988, a group of British Baptists visited South Africa on a "fact-finding" mission.[98] Subsequently, several articles were published in the British Baptist Times in which a largely positive assessment of the BU was presented.[99] Other British Baptists, however, painted a different picture.[100] For example, Keith Clements wrote a theological defence of the SACC's call for sanctions and, along with

---

94. Eg the Presidential address of Rev Ellis André at 1986 Assembly (Pretoria) drew attention to the social, economic and moral crisis in South Africa : see SABH 1986-87, p 175 and the his four articles on "Baptists and Politics" that appeared in SA Baptist (1985).

95. SABH 1983-84, pp 88 & 94.

96. Makhanya, Barkly West, p 37.

97. For a discussion of recent English Baptist political views see David W Bebbington, "Baptists and Politics since 1914" IN (ed) K Clements, Baptists in the Twentieth Century (London : Baptist Historical Society, 1983) pp 76-95.

98. SABH 1988-89, p 107.

99. Eg Baptist Times, March 10 1988, p 2.

100. See the newsletters published by Baptist Concern for Southern Africa, edited by Keith Clements, entitled Concern.

others, founded the newsletter, Concern, which reflected a more critical view of the South African Baptist Union.[101]

American Baptists from the SBC, as shown above, largely supported the BU. But there were individuals, such as Ken Sehested, (of the Baptist Peace Fellowship) who confessed :

> Many of our Baptist brothers and sisters in the U.S. and in Europe have a long history of complicity with racism and economic exploitation of people of colour. We pledge ourselves to speak and act, even though the result is discomfort and conflict.[102]

Such persons not only confessed their own complicity with racism, but also questioned the perspective and actions of the BU. Since the breakaway of the Baptist Convention in 1987, and the acceptance of the Convention's independent membership by the Baptist World Alliance in 1988, greater attention has been given to Baptist groups outside the BU.

In conclusion, then, white Baptists espoused a moderate type of reform that failed to get to the root of the various problems confronting the country and the Baptist Union itself. In addition, they did not "come to grips" with the challenges presented in either the Kairos Document or the EWISA confessional statement. Consequently, Baptist theological praxis and theological education remained locked within cautious, reformist formulations.

3. The Resistance of the Baptist Convention and the FCB.

The third Baptist response to the situation within the country and the BU (between 1985-1989) was that of resistance to privatization and white dominance. This response is exemplified by members of the Baptist Convention and the Fellowship of Concerned Baptists (FCB). To illustrate the character of this movement of resistance, two issues are discussed below : the reasons for the failure of the merger talks; and the emergence of the FCB.[103]

---

101. K Clements, God's Angry Love (Bristol : Christian Concern for Southern Africa, 1990).

102. FCB Newsletter 1:3 (October 1989) p 5.

103. For an analysis of a similar process of resistance to white control see Harald E Winkler, "The Divided Roots of Lutheranism in South Africa" (UCT : MA, 1989).

a) The failure of the Merger Talks.

In 1980, the BU gave the Special Associations (including the Baptist Convention), six years to dissolve and join the BU.[104] The Baptist Convention, however, was not content simply to be assimilated into BU structures. By 1982, a Committee was appointed by the Convention Executive to conduct negotiations concerning the future unity of Baptists in South Africa. The following key issues were specifically stated:

a) The historical review of Baptist work in South Africa
b) The need to preach a holistic gospel and the whole counsel of God
c) The need for one united Baptist church
d) The call for one theological education and seminary system, one team of workers and one pool of resources
e) The practical outworking of church-life in terms of human relationships, family life and local church life in all its social, cultural, economic and political aspects
f) To allow for a period of constitutional change to follow reconciliation and restitution.[105]

It is important to note, however, that such details were not printed in any of the BU Handbooks of this period. If the BU Executive did inform the Assembly fully about the actual conditions put forward by the Convention, these details were not minuted or printed in the BU Handbooks or Baptists Today magazine.

The Convention also invited other members of the "Special" Associations, namely the ABK and the two Indian bodies (NIBA and BASA) to participate in the negotiations. The latter did not respond, whereas the ABK "... attended only two such meetings where it strongly opposed any move to eradicate Apartheid in the Baptist Union and finally stopped attending these talks."[106] This meant that, up to 1987, the discussions were essentially between the white and African Baptist leaders although, as indicated below, some "Coloured" churches have since left the BU and joined the Baptist Convention.

Between 1984 and 1987 many meetings were held between the representatives of the BU and the Convention, and both groups issued a numbers of statements and reports.[107] Matters were brought to a head in June 1986 at the Convention's Assembly, where the President of the BU

---

104. Makhanya, Barkly West, p 36.

105. Ibid, p 37.

106. Ibid, p 37.

107. Ibid, pp 37-39 and SABH 1986-87, p 88.

presented a statement on the prospective merger which disturbed them so much that they called an extra-ordinary Assembly to meet in December of that same year. There, another statement was issued in which the Convention made it clear that they insisted that :

1) A new Constitution be draw up
2) Ministers of both groups be considered equal in status
3) One system of ordination
4) One theological education college
5) Finances and properties should belong equally to all
6) No merger without equality
7) Because the Convention was not equal in many ways its desire was to stand on its own, develop its own skills and leadership and that it would later consult with the BU regarding the implementation of the merger.[108]

The BU Executive later reported that the Convention members have "reservations about a merger at this time", but gave no details as to why this was the case.[109] In addition, whilst financial disputes were a central element in the discussions, the BU Executive reported that Rev Hill had addressed the Convention in December 1986 concerning the African Baptist Minister's Pension Fund and that "... suspicions were allayed, and renewed support for the Fund can be expected."[110] Given the fact that the Pension Fund remains to this day a burning issue between the BU and the Convention, this was surely a false impression. Finally, at the October 1987 BU Assembly, it was reported that negotiations were continuing and no specific problems were mentioned in the official digest of the Assembly's deliberations.[111]

By December 1987, the Convention had decided that it was no longer willing to continue to talk endlessly about a merger. At its 1987 Assembly it resolved to constitute itself as an independent body, remove the merger talks from its agenda, and withdraw from its associational status in the BU.[112] Only in May 1988 was this reported in the Baptists Today and Rev T Swart (the General Secretary of the BU) blandly added that the BU and the Convention were :

---

108. Makhanya, ibid, p 41.

109. SABH 1987-88, p 88.

110. SABH 1987-88, p 101.

111. SABH 1987-88, p 163.

112. Makhanya, op cit, p 41.

> ... committed to maintaining a healthy and sound relationship on the basis of brotherly fellowship.[113]

The BU Executive report subsequently referred to the Convention's decision to withdraw its Associational status and discontinue merger talks as "a blow to many".[114] Again, there was no mention of why the Convention had taken this drastic step, nor did the BU leaders give any indication that it was their own intransigence that had greatly contributed to this decision being taken.

But why, it must be asked, did these "merger" talks fail? There were fundamental differences between what the BU and Convention leaders understood the term "merger" to mean. Whilst the BU leaders believed that the Convention should simply be absorbed into the existing BU structures, the Convention leaders understood "merger" to imply the following :

1) One identical Constitution
2) A common church register
3) A common ministerial roll
4) A coming together for the purpose of sharing, and not just to "give" or to "receive" in a paternalistic manner.[115]

Inherent in these conflicting approaches were a number of crucial differences:

(i) Different perceptions of the BU's history.

The Convention representatives who came to the talks were conscious of a long legacy of suffering as a result of Apartheid both within the country and within the Baptist churches. They were no longer willing to tolerate oppression at the hands of whites; they were determined that if unity was to be achieved it would be a meaningful unity and not just a continuation of the old pattern of white dominance and black acquiescence. This was why specific conditions were set by the Convention. But, because the BU leaders were unable to adjust to this new determination, they perceived the Convention leaders as too radical.

Given the background that has been sketched thus far in this thesis, it is not difficult to understand why the BU leaders were unable to hear what was being said to them. Up until this time there had been no real

---

113. Baptists Today (May 1988) p 1.

114. SABH 1988-89, p 90 & 99, 164.

115. Makhanya, Barkly West, p 39.

consciousness amongst the members of the BU that they had conformed to the ideologies of white "trusteeship" and, later, Apartheid. White Baptists continued to believe that they had actively opposed Apartheid despite the fact that, socially, the BU functioned as means of blinding white Baptists to the realities of the situation in South Africa and, simultaneously, had failed to empower black Baptists. As Rev Kevin Roy pointed out, after 150 years of mission work, the churches of the Baptist Union "are still predominantly white", and he went on to say that :

> This makes the BU a more comfortable place for many white Christians, but is it not the sign of a tragic failure? (116)

Des Hoffmeister put it even more strongly :

> At the heart of the problem is the evil, satanic apartheid system that is deeply rooted in the BU. It is seen in ALL the structures of the BU, eg inferior education, group associations... disparity in salaries and power firmly in the hands of whites. (117)

(ii) Assimilation or radical transformation?

The Convention wanted a radical transformation of the BU structures, but the BU understood "merger" in the sense of assimilation, a concept which was no longer acceptable to the Convention :

> ... the Baptist Union understands "merger" to mean grafting into its present existing structure all those who come to beg for membership. It also wishes to affirm its immutable code of criteria [the BU Constitution] for membership into its Union. (118)

This lack of comprehension (or deliberate obduracy) on the part of the BU was illustrated in the decision of the BU to rationalise Theological Colleges in such a way that only the Parktown and Western Province Colleges remained part of the BU. (119) The BBI College was later sold to a group of American Baptists. All of these decisions were taken without consultation with the Convention in the midst of the "merger" talks. This evokes the suspicion

---

116. Baptists Today (Aug 1987) p 11.

117. Hoffmeister, "My reflections of the 1989 Baptist Union Assembly held at Kimberley", p 1.

118. FCB Newsletter 1:2 (August 1988) p 3.

119. SABH 1986-87, pp 88 & 180.

that the BU was not serious about the talks. As a black Baptist pastor later sadly said :

> We spent much time and money in consultations - all in vain... if there had been confession and repentance, we could have merger today.[120]

The BU leaders gave misleadingly bland reports to the Assembly and were noticeably slow to respond to the specific conditions laid down by the Convention. Possibly they were looking over their shoulders and worrying what the response of their white constituency would be, especially since there was a conservative "backlash" from many whites following the controversial George Assembly in 1985. Given that white Baptists were so abysmally ignorant of the reasons why the Convention was unwilling tamely to merger with the Union on the Union's terms, the BU leaders could expect little in the way of support from their own constituency. So, while they desperately sought a moderate "middle-way", the Convention lost patience with their patent lack of understanding, their unwillingness to repent and make restitution for the long years of oppression, and decided to establish an independent body. As late as 1989, 41% of BU respondents to my questionnaire stated that "the influence of black radicals and the unwillingness of the Convention leaders to negotiate..." were responsible for the Convention's breakaway from the Union. Only 19% cited the "Convention's rejection of the paternalism of the Union and the way in which the white Union churches have compromised the Christian faith in not actively resisting the government's Apartheid policies" as the reason for the Convention's action.[121]

(iii) Paternalism or equality?

The Convention leaders deliberately rejected the option of assimilation because they were aware of the inability of their members to participate meaningfully in a structure that favoured a white approach and agenda. They sought to argue for a form of "merger" that would allow blacks to break out of the stranglehold of paternalism and move towards a substantive experience of equality. But, as Des Hoffmeister has argued :

> ... the Baptist Union (BU) leadership failed to come to terms with the Baptist Convention (BC) as equals and dignified human

120. From the "Workshop Notes" in Barkly West, p 42.

121. See Appendix, Enclosure 6.

beings. They were written off as insignificant and instigators.[122]

Even after it was clear that the Convention had declared its independence, the BU found it difficult to accept that the talks were over and that the Convention was no longer part of the BU "family". For example, in the 1988-89 Handbook, the BU was still printing the names of the Convention ministers. In addition, the Baptist Union has not accepted the full implications of the Convention's resolution. According to Convention officials, they have sought to de-stabalise the Convention by :

1) Undermining the leadership of the Convention by directly corresponding with its members
2) Watering down of its own criteria for membership in order to lure Convention churches to join the Baptist Union
3) Using Apartheid machinery to slow down growth and international exposure of the Convention
4) Threatening the closure of church buildings to Convention members
5) Using White economic wealth to attract and divide poor Black Convention churches
6) Using the Minsters Pension Fund as a means to draw and hold members in membership of the Union
7) Reinstating and recognising ministers who were under discipline by the Convention for unacceptable moral behaviour.[123]

Even from the BU's own publications it is plain that the BU did, in fact, write to Convention pastors after the Convention had overwhelmingly decided at its Assembly to sever its Associational status.[124] Also, several churches in the poverty-stricken Border region were wooed back into the BU and promised support for a range of ministries including church building, welfare and relief work.[125]

It remains to be seen whether the black pastors who have re-joined the BU will remain content with the manipulative form of membership offered to them by the BU.

b) The Emergence of the FCB.

---

122. "My reflections of the 1989 Baptist Union Assembly held at Kimberley", p 1.

123. Makhanya, op cit, p 41.

124. Baptists Today (Aug 1988) p 9.

125. Baptists Today (June 1989) p 2.

Another group which exhibited strong resistance to the Baptist Union's privatised model of the Christian faith was the small group of people associated with the FCB. This group included some of the leaders of the Convention as well as disenchanted individuals from within the Union.

The FCB was founded as a result of a group of thirty people meeting to discuss the EWISA document during course of October 1986 BU Assembly.[126] Unhappy with the BU's cautious reforms and its continued (unacknowledged) conformity with white interests, as well as the Assembly's failure to discuss the implications of this vital document for the BU, they founded the FCB. The members of the FCB described themselves as an association of persons from both the BU and BC, along with other Baptists, who were trying to answer the question :

> What can we as Baptists do to extend the Kingdom of God in South Africa at this time and how can Baptists through a prophetic ministry as well as specific actions help to build a new, democratic, non-racial South Africa in which the Church of Jesus Christ will be an influential force?[127]

The FCB was, from the outset, closely associated with the Concerned Evangelicals (CE) and they participated in seminars dealing with issues such as : the history of missions; the Gospel in context; conversion and incarnation; liberation theology; and political strategies.[128] These deliberations began to have an effect on certain groups within the BU. According to D Manuel, the controversial Assembly in George (1985) and the formation of the FCB (1986) led to greater awareness amongst "Coloured" Baptists of the indoctrination to which they had been exposed, and they began to question their own history and the motives of the white missionary pioneers.[129]

Rather than taking heed of the contribution of this group, elements within the BU soon began to criticise the FCB. Perhaps the most vituperative reaction was that of G H Baker whose letter was published by the Baptists Today magazine :

> This evil was spawned at the 1986 Assembly and will be pursued at the 1987 Assembly and I take the strongest exception to their perpetrating their pernicious dogmas under the auspices of

---

126. FCB Newsletter 1:1 (March 1987) p 2.

127. FCB Newsletter 1:1 (March 1987) p 1. Also see the statement of the FCB's objectives in the Appendix, Enclosure 4.

128. Cf "FCB minutes" (11 October 1989) p 3.

129. Manuel, Barkly West, p 45.

> Baptist Union Assemblies... Christians and delegates at the 1987 Assembly, 'Beware of the wrath to come'.[130]

In the same letter, Baker went on to criticise the FCB for spreading "'passive resistance' to Governmental authority"; of inciting "civil disobedience"; of not spreading the Gospel; and of encouraging a "polarization amongst Baptists which may escalate if the Convention is brought into the Baptist Union". In response, Ivor Jenkins and Shirley Walker wrote letters explaining the actual aims of the FCB.[131] Although not all in the BU adopted Baker's strong line, the FCB's witness has not been welcomed and very few BU members have joined the FCB. Whereas 79% of the BU respondents to my questionnaire said that they had heard of the FCB, only 31% said that they agreed with their aims. 51% could give no information concerning the aims of the FCB, and 7% openly disagreed with the views and actions of the FCB.[132]

Significantly, overseas reactions to the FCB were positive. In April 1989, an international team of Evangelical visitors to South Africa (including two Baptists) noted the ignorance of the white Evangelical community and the frustration of those few concerned white Christians who became alienated from their churches when they sought to introduce alternative ideas. They also saw groups such as the FCB as a sign of hope.[133]

Such, then, was the threefold Baptist response to the events of 1985-1989, namely the reactionary approach of right wing groups, the tentative reforms of the BU, and the resistance to theological privatization exhibited by the members of the Baptist Convention and the FCB.

In conclusion, then, between 1978-1984, the BU did introduce certain structural reforms. But these reforms constituted an inadequate response to the long-standing divisions and inequalities within the BU. During these years, there were also increasing signs of dissatisfaction amongst the leaders of the Baptist Convention as revealed by their rejection of the authority of the white missionaries (or co-ordinators). In 1982, the TBU

---

130. Baptists Today (Aug 1987) p 11.

131. Baptists Today (Oct 1987) p 10 and (June 1989) p 10.

132. Cf Appendix, Enclosure 6.

133. Cf "Findings Report of a Team of International Evangelical Visitors to South Africa" (1989) pp 3ff.

broke away from the BU because of the latter's continued exhibition of paternalism, white dominance, and conformity with the policies of Apartheid.

During 1985-1989, resistance intensified both in the country as a whole and within the BU itself. Despite the increasing awareness of other Christians in the country that it was the task of the Christian churches to oppose the injustice and violence engendered by the government's policy of Apartheid, the BU continued to pursue its privatised religious concerns. Despite the many BU Assembly resolutions addressed to the government which criticised aspects of government policy, the BU perpetuated segregation and white domination within its own structures. Like the government of the day, the BU was unable to respond meaningfully to the radical transformation demanded by blacks. Consequently, the FCB was formed, the "merger" talks broke down, and the Convention declared itself independent of the BU.

By 1989, Baptists in South Africa were deeply divided, not only along structural lines but also by conflicting perceptions of the Gospel, the Church, and mission. This raises the question addressed in the final chapter: what conclusions should South African Baptists draw from their diverse socio-theological heritage as well as from their own history, and what are the future prospects for South African Baptists?

****

CHAPTER 8

SUMMATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS.

In this final chapter, an attempt is made to draw together the main threads of the thesis. Therefore, the various conclusions that can be drawn from each of the preceding chapters are briefly summarised. Thereafter, attention is given to the various options facing Baptists in this country as well as my own personal views concerning the direction that South African Baptists should embark upon in the years that lie ahead.

A. SUMMATION OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

As indicated in chapter one, privatization is closely linked to the process of secularization understood in the sense of the decline of the social power of religion. Because South African Baptists have largely privatised their faith, they have been unable to challenge the State effectively or prevent their own theological praxis from being dominated by white self-interest.

This privatization of the Christian faith is reflected in the dualism, spiritualization, individualism, and lack of contextual analysis that characterises the Baptist churches in South Africa. These restricted perceptions of the Christian faith are clearly manifest in the theology of the BU as summarised in their Statement of Belief and Statement of Baptist Principles. Equally, their privatised theology has led to a separation between the personal and social aspects of the Gospel. South African Baptists have not realised fully that although Christian faith must encompass the personal faith of the individual, it should not be restricted to a spiritual or transcendent realm of meaning and experience. This has made it possible for the BU to so over-emphasise privatised spiritual concerns that they have created ecclesiastical structures and missionary policies that more closely reflect white ideological and social domination than they do the love and unity that should characterise Christian communities.

The second chapter of this thesis, which deals with methodology, emphasises that the social context within which theology is formulated cannot be ignored. All believers are influenced, in one way or another, by their racial, cultural, class, and gender allegiances. Similarly, the historical experience and/or understanding of religious groups such as the Baptists are

important in that they form the consciousness of their adherents. Revisionist histories, therefore, can throw new light on both the past and the present since they seek to uncover the "underside" of history. These new perceptions, in turn, can inform the awareness of Baptists concerning the various contexts that have played, and still do play, a role in the formation of theological praxis. Contextual theologies, then, precisely because they consciously seek to relate theological doctrines to a variety of contexts so that these contexts can, in turn, influence the formulation of doctrine, are far less likely to be unconsciously determined. This is particularly true if a range of individuals and social groups can, together, participate in the reformulation and application of the Christian faith (and the Baptist tradition) to the challenges of contemporary South Africa.

Chapter three deals with the complex issue of discovering the Reformation roots of the South African Baptists. It is argued here that, contrary to the views of the majority of South African Baptists, the Anabaptist tradition forms a vital component of their theological heritage. Not only can the 17th century English Baptists be historically linked to the 16th century Anabaptists, but the theological views of the English (and, thereby, the South African Baptists) can also be traced to Anabaptist theological praxis. Arguably, the Anabaptists, because of their rejection of the Constantinian Church/State model, their emphasis on believer's baptism, their belief in religious and civic liberty, and their stress on mission and social ethics, more significantly influenced the Baptist tradition than did the magisterial Reformers and the Separatists.

South African Baptists can benefit from re-discovering their Anabaptist antecedents and, in particular, the Anabaptist understanding of the essence of the Christian faith as radical discipleship and witness, true community, and social concern. Even those Anabaptists who withdrew from "the world" understood themselves to be refusing to conform to the evil laws and unjust rulers of their day; they did not fail to exercise their faith in service for their neighbours. Those Anabaptists who were involved in the Peasants' War even more obviously revealed their understanding that the freedom and dignity that the Gospel offers human beings cannot be abstracted from their social context. Religious liberty cannot be separated from civic liberties nor can religious faith be isolated from social ethics.

It is also shown in chapter three that the social emphases of Luther and Calvin have been largely ignored or distorted. Neither of them believed that the rulers (whether they were princes or magistrates) should be uncritically obeyed. Both of them, and Calvin in particular, taught that

Christians should exercise their faith in their social context. Sadly, subsequent distortions, particularly of their emphasis on the individual appropriation of the Christian faith and Luther's "two Kingdoms" doctrine, seem to have influenced the 19th and 20th century South African Baptists more significantly than the original teachings of the magisterial Reformers.

The South African Baptist roots, as argued in chapter four, also need to be re-examined. Present day South African Baptist perceptions of their English forebears over-emphasise the insularity and spiritual decline of the 18th century and the revival and missionary concern of the early 19th century. Virtually excluded are the 17th century heritage of social radicalism and the renewed social involvement that characterised the English Baptist churches after the 1820 settlers had departed for South Africa. Consequently, the fact that the Baptists had fought in the English Civil War to secure religious and civic liberties, as well as socio-economic and political change, is virtually unknown in our local churches. Insufficient attention is given to the fact that, as a consequence of the Evangelical revival, the English Baptists were able to overcome their moribund spiritual state and give attention a number of socio-political and economic issues including that of slavery. Nor are many Baptist leaders, let alone members, aware that Spurgeon's theological praxis contained important social elements. Moreover, South African Baptists are largely ignorant of the fact that other English Baptists, particularly John Clifford, were prominent social prophets who criticised the socio-political inequalities and the selfish capitalism of their day. They were also opposed to the suppression of the rights of women and children, and the failure of some Baptists to integrate their personal religious concerns with committed social involvement. It is a tragedy that the insights of leaders such as Clifford were lost to South African Baptists precisely when they most needed to hear the voice of a social prophet from within their own tradition.

In addition, though South African Baptists have made reference to their nonconformist heritage, particularly in the resolutions that BU Assemblies addressed to the government, they failed to take sufficiently seriously the fact that, in conforming to white domination, they subjected others to the same suffering that Baptists had experienced in England. Thus, white Baptists voted for or, at least, obeyed a government that propagated Apartheid despite the fact that it denied the dignity and civic liberties of black Baptists and subjected them to a vast number of unjust laws similar to those that oppressed the English Baptists between the 17th to 19th centuries.

In short, South African Baptists failed to "drink from their own wells", that is, to apply the lessons learnt by their English Baptist forebears.

The fifth chapter of this thesis shows that in Germany, repeated persecution and the influence of certain American and English evangelicals meant that the German Baptist churches, too, espoused a privatised faith. The German Baptist settlers, as well as successive German ministers, brought with them a conception of the Christian faith that encouraged social withdrawal and conformity. In addition, both the English and German Baptists perpetuated their Euro-centric theology within the South African context. Consequently, the theological praxis of both these settler groups largely exemplified narrow theological concerns. Evangelism, personal discipleship, and church growth were the principal features of their Christian faith and these determined the development of their 19th century theological perceptions and congregational activities. In addition to their privatised theology and Euro-centrism, the 19th century South African Baptist pioneers conformed to the white ideologies that justified the brutal extension and maintenance of colonial rule. The religious freedom and civic liberties of the Khoikhoi, Xhosa, and other black groups, were neither recognised nor defended. On the contrary, these "barbarians, savages and heathen" had to be taught to accept European law, religion and customs. They had to accept the social, economic, and political domination of the "superior European civilisation". In short, the Baptist settlers adopted the settler ideology which legitimated black subjugation and white privilege.

Consequently, the preaching, congregational activities, and ecclesiastical structures of the Baptist denomination reflected the arrogance and privatised spiritual concerns of its white adherents. Mission work, too, when engaged in at all, was conducted on the basis that blacks must be converted, not only to Christianity, but to an imperialistic, European form of Christianity that expected blacks to abandon entirely their own cultural distinctives, identity and pride. 19th century Baptists neither preached nor practised a holistic Gospel that could genuinely meet the psychological, spiritual, and social needs of the black people of South Africa. Tragically, many 20th century Baptists have simply perpetuated these false and un-Christian attitudes and structures. Rather than drawing on the holistic spirituality of the Bible and, in particular, of the Old Testament prophets and Jesus himself, Baptists have allowed themselves to follow the pattern of the world to which they should be witnessing concerning the mercy, justice and liberation offered to humanity by the Christian Gospel.

During the 20th century, as shown in chapter six, the white dominated BU responded to their social context by criticising various elements of government policy. Simultaneously, however, they put into practice the ideologies upon which the government policies were based, namely, white trusteeship, segregation, and white domination. Moreover, the BU leaders have failed to inform their members properly about their theological heritage, or to mobilise them to make the BU resolutions more effective. The majority of the members of the South African Baptist churches (black and white) are ignorant of their socio-theological heritage. Because of ignorance, prejudice and the self-interest of its white members, the BU instituted separate Theological Colleges, regional and national Committees, ethnic Associations, and separate Assemblies. The BBC congregations remained "missions" subject to the SABMS, whilst white congregations were accepted as full members of the BU. Blacks were the objects of mission and were considered as incapable of being trusted with independence or power. Black Baptists were, in effect, not simply regarded as different, but as racially and culturally inferior. The very obvious class differences engendered by white economic exploitation and political exclusion constituted a further excuse to avoid asking why the theological unity of Baptist believers was not being expressed within the local congregational experience of South African Baptists. Women, too, were disabled by being kept theologically illiterate and, thereby, prevented from attaining positions of influence within the denomination.

The seventh chapter of the thesis reveals that several movements of resistance have, in recent years, begun to challenge and reject the reactionary and reformist approaches that characterise white Baptist theological praxis. Both the TBU and the Baptist Convention have broken off their Associational ties with the BU, and the FCB was established to provide a forum in which new theological formulations and practical strategies could be developed. These examples of resistance to the privatization of the Gospel so characteristic of the BU have rejected the cosmetic reforms proposed by white Baptists. They are unwilling to be assimilated into an ecclesiastical structure that self-righteously proclaims its "neutrality" whilst perpetuating white dominance. As was revealed in the collapse of the "merger" talks, and at Conferences such the one held at Barkly West in 1990, the BU needs to re-examine its past and its preconceptions far more critically than has hitherto been the case. Black Baptists, too, need to ask why they have submitted to domination for so long.

In the light of these conclusions, then, what are the future prospects for South African Baptists?

B. 1990 AND BEYOND : WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Since the unbanning of organizations such as the ANC, SACP, and PAC in February 1990, South Africa has entered a new period of its history. The negotiations that have followed, together with the attendant new possibilities, violence, confusion, financial scandals, accusations and counter-accusations engendered by these negotiations (and their breakdown), have provided cause for both hope and fear. Within this complex situation, the churches have sought to make their own contribution to the creation of a new society. Predictably, the churches have been influenced by their differing histories and the interests of various groups within their ranks. Thus, some have whole-heartedly welcomed events such as the Rustenburg Conference of 1990, whilst others have resisted both confession and change. Even more insidious is the attempt of groups such as the BU to jump onto the reformist bandwagon, in an attempt to give the appearance of real change without going through the painful process of repentance, restitution, reconciliation, and the transformation of their theological praxis.

1. Preparing for the future by dealing adequately with the past.

It is necessary for all South African Baptists to face both the past and the challenges of the present if we are to enter the future with some sense of direction and vision. But, as indicated throughout this thesis, Baptists in South Africa have different views concerning their past. It is my opinion, in the light of the evidence presented in this study, that a re-consideration of our history, theology, church activities, structures, and mission work is vital. As indicated by the papers presented at the 1990 Barkly West National Workshop, the Convention has begun to do precisely this.[1] An essential part of this re-reading of the past is the psychological aspect. As one of the participants at Barkly West put it : "It

---

1. See Barkly West and the unpublished responses by C Parnell and Brian Gurney.

is time to address our own feelings of inferiority and fear."[2] Diba Madolo emphasised this need for "empowerment from below :

> It is equally sinful to accept inferiority as it is to feel superior to your fellow human being. It is now time for us to rise up. If people knock us down and crush us, we must not lie down but arise to the glory of God. If people belittle us, we must not accept this but believe in what God has revealed in his Word about us.[3]

In order to deal adequately with the past, says Des Hoffmeister, the BU must publically acknowledge its complicity with Apartheid and indicate actions to which it binds itself in order to rectify the wrong that has been done. It must also accept black leadership and stop its practice of using money as a mechanism of control. The Convention, in his view, must concentrate on healing the hurt experienced by its members by identifying the actual causes of this hurt. It must also pursue the path of self-discovery and take responsibility for its own future.[4]

2. Choices facing Baptists.

South African Baptists live in a country characterised by impending social and ecological disaster. Financial and natural resources, as a consequence of both greed and dire poverty, have been seriously misused. Reports of economic corruption and mismanagement feature in our newspapers with disillusioning regularity, whilst political conflict and manipulation threaten to rend the country apart. The principal features of our society are uncertainty, unemployment, family strife, inflation, rising crime, and a striking disparity in terms of access to land, housing, education and social mobility. Clearly, a privatised theological praxis that encourages the individual to withdraw into a comfortable (but illusory) security zone, provided by churches that pander to this desire for a religiously legitimated form of escapism, is simply not capable of responding meaningfully to the range of personal, family and social needs already outlined. What, then, are the options facing Baptists (and other believers) in this country?

---

2. Workshop Notes, Barkly West, p 42.

3. Madolo, Barkly West, p 61. Cf also Manuel's comments concerning the "Coloured" churches, ibid, p 44.

4. Hoffmeister, Barkly West, pp 49-50.

a) A Holistic or a Privatised Gospel?

If Baptists wish to espouse a more holistic theology, they will have to develop a less fundamentalistic approach to the Bible. The claim that "we preach the Bible and the Bible alone" must be closely investigated because our interpretations of the Biblical text are not value-free. Both the context within which the Bible was written, as well as the influence of the contexts of the modern interpreters (including their ideological commitments), must be taken into account. Thus Madolo has argued that Baptists need a new understanding of scripture which will include : an awareness of both the Bible and social reality; a rejection of spiritualization; and the use of critical (theological and sociological) skills. Such an approach will also be supportive of the strengths of the Evangelical tradition; will be contextual and in dialogue with other Christians; and will develop the necessary skills for ministry.(5)

Together with a less fundamentalist hermeneutic, Baptists need to develop a broader understanding of Christian spirituality. Pastoral care, theological education, preaching, worship, and mission need to be directed towards individual persons and groups within their social context.(6) There should not be a false separation between social concern and the discipleship of the Christian, or between the Church's worship and its prophetic witness.(7) Similarly, the mission of the church should not be aimed only at "saving the lost", but also at "healing the sick" and "empowering the poor".(8) The Church's proclamation of the Kingdom (or rule) of God is not to be directed solely toward the individual, but also toward societies and nations, so that these can be challenged to reflect the justice, mercy, reconciliation and wholeness of the Christian proclamation of salvation. The proclamation (and implementation) of such a Gospel will have profound

---

5. Madolo Barkly West, p 64. Cf the comments of a black student at Parktown College in Baptists Today (Oct 1990) p 1.

6. J de Gruchy, Theology and Ministry, pp 157-169; see also G Nicolson, "Prayed Politics in South Africa", FCB Newsletter 1:2 (August 1988) p 2.

7. Cf J de Gruchy, Cry Justice (London : Collins, 1986); (eds) J R Cochrane, et al, In Word and Deed (Pietermaritzburg : Cluster, 1991); and (eds) M Worsnip and D van der Water, We shall Overcome (Pietermaritzburg : Cluster, 1991).

8. D Bosch, "Mission in Jesus' Way : A Perspective from Luke's Gospel" Miss 17:1 (1989) pp 3-21.

implications for the diverse social and ecological crises facing all South Africans.

In the same way that the social perceptions of Baptists are limited by their abhorrence (or ignorance) of the sociology of religion, their emphasis on the individual's soul is impoverished by its rejection of the insights of psychology. The call of God towards wholeness includes the human psyche's painful journey towards self-discovery and healing.[9] Unless such healing takes place, there is little chance that individual believers will achieve the full development of their gifts and ministries, or be able to exercise these meaningfully within their churches and the society at large.[10] The enormous problems which we face will, then, receive no theoretical or practical input from the thousands of people who profess to be Baptists.

If insights such as these are not applied, Baptists' Christian experience and witness will remain encapsulated within a form of "clerical technology" which

> reinforces both the ecclesiastical and the socio-political status quo because it is designed for maintenance not for personal and social transformation ... We thus end up with a missiology which is manipulative, trying to control rather than serve people and society, and often only perceiving others in individualistic and statistical terms."[11]

In short, if Baptists wish to develop a form of theological praxis capable of producing a relevant and prophetic witness in the future (rather than simply promoting social conformity), their entire understanding of theology, the Bible, theological education, discipleship, ministry, spirituality, and mission, need to be transformed.[12] They need to break out of the intellectual and social restrictions of privatization and live out a holistic, biblical form of salvation.

---

9. Cf E O' Connor's Journey Inward, Journey Outward (New York : Harper and Row, 1968) and G Hughes, God of Surprises (London : Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985).

10. For a chilling, but fascinating analysis of the interrelation between child-rearing, psychological damage and totalitarianism see Alice Miller, For your own good (London : Virago, 1983). Though written in a German context, it includes much that is relevant to South African families and political life.

11. J de Gruchy, Theology and Ministry, pp 130 & 131.

12. In his thesis Ellis André argues that Baptists need : self-criticism; a re-examination of scripture; and a more consistent approach in which theory and practice are integrated, op cit, pp 110-120.

b) Race, Culture, Class and Gender challenges.

As part of the holistic approach to the Christian faith outlined above, Baptists must deal satisfactorily with the race, culture, class, and gender challenges of our time. Baptist churches in South Africa remain divided between black and white churches; between those that identify with African or Western/European values; between rich and poor; and between those supportive of sexual equality and those which accord divergent status and roles to male and female members.

A great deal of attention has already been given in this thesis to the racial, cultural and class divisions within the Baptist churches in South Africa. Clearly, only an approach that takes the distortions of the history, theology and structures of the BU into account can hope to emerge with a meaningful and realistic vision of Baptist unity.[13] A reactionary, right wing or even a mild, reformist approach will be inadequate, as will a response based on "cheap grace" in which forgiveness is expected before remorse and repentance have been experienced. Nothing short of genuine repentance, restitution, and the transformation of the entire South African Baptist theological praxis will suffice to heal the deep divisions between us. Both Baptists overseas and, especially, Baptists within Africa itself, will have a role to play. But the actual task of transformation can only be undertaken by local Baptists who are prepared to move beyond "pseudo-community", through conflict, into genuine community.[14]

Whilst feminist issues have received some attention both within the BU and the Convention in recent years, the position of women still leaves much to be desired.[15] Only very few women have graduated from Baptist Colleges[16] and, although individual churches within the BU are now free to employ women as pastors, the structure of the BU remains completely

---

13. See "Ethos : Study on development of Evangelicals since EWISA - Baptists" (Unpublished paper, 1991).

14. Scott Peck discusses the stages of pseudocommunity, chaos, emptiness and community in A Different Drum (London : Arrow, 1987/1990).

15. See Alf Niewoudt's "Women and Eldership" and a critique by B Gurney (1988) as well as the papers prepared for a BU Seminar in 1989 written by R Codrington, B Harris and M Holdt.

16. eg SABH 1982-83, pp 102 & 104; SABH 1987-88, p 102; Baptist Today (Nov 1988) p 3.

unchanged.[17] Very few women are employed as ministers, Baptist women as a whole are not conscientised, and many men do not support the ordination of women. In 1989, 72% of the respondents to my questionnaire stated that their church had no female deacons and only 29% indicated that they supported the ordination of women.[18] Within the Convention, attempts are being made to move towards the establishment of a "non-sexist" church.[19] But what is needed is a comprehensive re-reading of our Baptist heritage and the traditional male-orientated interpretations of the Bible and theological writings.[20]

Baptists elsewhere have, in recent years, given a great deal of attention to this gender issue. In Britain, Ms Margaret Jarman, was elected as the second Baptist woman President in 1987.[21] In the USA, women have also been making their voices heard and gaining greater influence within individual churches and in the denomination as a whole.[22] South African Baptists, both women and men, need to give urgent attention to the status and role of women in their churches and society.

If we South African Baptists, then, prepare for the future by dealing adequately with the past and honestly facing the choices confronting us, we may indeed become a true community of baptised believers. In my view, nothing but a radical process of self-examination (on the part of both black and white Baptists), a repudiation of privatization, and a willingness to develop new paradigms of faith and ministry together, will enable South African Baptists to move appropriately into the future. If Baptists can

---

17. SABH 1988-89, p 168; Baptist Today (Apr 1989) p 10, (May 1989) p 1 and (June 1989) p 110.

18. See Appendix, Enclosure 6.

19. See the Declaration published in Barkly West, p 72.

20. See L Kretzschmar "The Relevance of Feminist Theology within the Southern African context" IN (eds) D Ackerman, et al, Women hold up Half the Sky (Pietermaritzburg : Cluster, 1991) pp 106-121.

21. Baptists Today (July 1987) p 4. Cf also the entire issue of Bapt Q 31:7 (1986) for articles written by E Lehmann, S Dex, M Jarman, R Matthews, C McCarthy & J Briggs.

22. Eg see the entire issue of Exp T 83:1 (1986) for articles by P Scalise, R Ormanson, M Marshall-Green & C DeArmond Blevins and R Beck, et al; see also "The impact of Southern Baptist women on Social Issues : Three viewpoints", Bapt H & H 22:3 (July 1987) 29-40.

start here, the possibility of a more creative, holistic, and united Baptist witness in South Africa may still emerge before we enter the 21st century.

****

APPENDIX.

ENCLOSURE 1 :

A STATEMENT OF BELIEF.

Passed by the BU Assembly at Durban in September, 1924.

(From : The South African Baptist Handbook, 1988-1989, p 177)

1. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their original writing as fully inspired of God and accept them as the supreme and final authority for faith and life.

2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons -Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.

4. We believe that God created man in His own image; that man sinned and thereby incurred the penalty of death, physical and spiritual; that all human beings inherit a sinful nature which issues (in the case of those who reach moral responsibility) in actual transgression involving personal guilt.

5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, a substitutionary sacrifice, according to the Scriptures, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.

6. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus, His ascension into heaven, and His present life as our High Priest and Advocate.

7. We believe in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. We believe that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.

9. We believe in the resurrection both of the just and the unjust, the eternal blessedness of redeemed and the eternal banishment of those who have rejected the offer of salvation.

10. We believe that the one true Church is the whole company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit; that the local Church on earth should take its character from this conception of the Church spiritual, and therefore that the new birth and personal confession of Christ are essentials of Church membership.

11. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ appointed two ordinances - Baptism and the Lord's Supper - to be observed as acts of obedience and as perpetual witnesses to the cardinal facts of the Christian faith; that Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as a confession of identification with Christ in burial and resurrection, and that the Lord's Supper is partaking of bread and wine as symbolical of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood, in remembrance of His sacrificial death till He come.

****

FCB ADDITIONS TO THE BU STATEMENT OF FAITH.

12. We believe that human rights are derived from God - from His nature, His creation and His commands; that concern for human rights is at the heart of the Christian faith; and that every major doctrine is related to human rights, beginning with the Biblical revelation of God. We believe that justice and mercy are integral attributes of God and therefore used in the Bible to describe God's ways with human beings, and that they are also set forth as the responsibility of human to human.

13. We believe that humanity has been created for a relationship with God, for social relationships in which human potential can be developed to the fullest, and for a harmonious relationship with nature and an enjoyment of her fruits.

(From the FCB Constitution. It has been proposed that the Statement of Faith be entirely re-written, but this task has not yet been completed.)

****

ENCLOSURE 2 :

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

(As revised and adopted at the Annual BU Assembly in 1933, and amended at subsequent Assemblies)

(Sections 4 and 5, as found in The South African Baptist Handbook, 1987-1988, p.181)

4. Declaration of Principle

The basis of the Union is :

1. That the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty to interpret and administer His Laws.

2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day."

3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

5. Objects

The objects of the Union are :

5.1 To advance the cause of the kingdom of God primarily in Southern Africa.

5.2 To promote unity and brotherly love among its member churches and churches moving towards membership.

5.3 To disseminate Baptist Principles and to maintain religious liberty.

5.4 To establish and assist Churches wherein Baptist Principles are practised.

****

ENCLOSURE 3 :

STATEMENT OF BAPTIST PRINCIPLES.

(From : The South African Baptist Handbook 1988-1989, p 178)

PREAMBLE :

We as Baptists share many areas of our faith with other members of the professing Christian Church. These include a belief in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; in the supreme Lordship of Jesus Christ as Head of the Church; and in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

There are however areas of principle and practice where we as Baptists make distinctive emphases arising out of our understanding of the Scriptures. It is to clarify these that the following statement is made.

We, as Baptists, believe in :

1. The CHURCH as the whole company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The local church, being a manifestation of the universal church, is a community of believers in a particular place where the Word of God is preached and ordinances of the Lord's Supper are observed. It is fully autonomous, except insofar as it binds itself through voluntary association.

2. BELIEVER'S BAPTISM as an act of obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and a sign of personal repentance, faith and regeneration; it consists of the immersion in water into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. The principle of CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT, namely, that a constituted church meeting is, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the highest court of authority for the local church; and that each individual member has the inalienable right and responsibility to participate fully in the life and government of the church, including the appointment of its leaders.

4. The PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS, by which we understand that each Christian has direct access to God through Christ our High Priest, and shares with Him in His work of reconciliation. This involves intercession, worship, faithful service and bearing witness to Jesus Christ, even to the end of the earth.

5. The principle of RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, namely that no individual should be coerced either by the State or by any secular, ecclesiastical or religious group in matters of faith. The right of private conscience is to be respected. For each believer this means the right to interpret the Scriptures responsibly and to act in the light of his conscience.

6. The principle of SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE in that, in the providence of God, the two differ in their respective natures and functions. The Church is not to be identified with the State nor is it, in its faith or practice, to be directed or controlled by the State. The State is responsible for administering justice, ensuring an orderly community, and promoting the welfare of its citizens. The Church is responsible for preaching the Gospel and for demonstrating and making known God's will and care for all mankind.

(Adopted : October 1987)

****

ENCLOSURE 4 :

OBJECTIVES OF THE FCB.

(From : The FCB Constitution)

1. To motivate Baptist churches and individuals in South Africa to give practical expression of their endeavour to oppose injustice, oppression and racism which are endemic in the South African Apartheid system.

2. To make Baptists aware of the true situation in South Africa, of what is really happening in the country.

3. To provide opportunity and create structures whereby Baptists of different races and cultures meet and get to know each other and work together for reconciliation at all levels of the Baptist denomination.

4. To provide relief to families and persons with special needs, of the Baptist family firstly, but not exclusively.

5. To provide aid for the development and upliftment of deprived communities, e.g. by initiating self-help projects.

6. To provide a platform for Baptist Churches and individuals to plan co-operative actions to implement the above objectives.

7. To co-operate with other Christian and like-minded organisations in their endeavours to work for justice, peace and reconciliation in South Africa, e.g. the "Concerned Evangelicals".

8. To open communication links with the Baptist World Alliance to inform it of the existence, objectives and actions of the Fellowship.

****

ENCLOSURE 5 :

THE BARKLY WEST DECLARATION.

(From : The Barkly West National Awareness Campaign Booklet, adopted in June 1990)

The participants to the Awareness Workshop of the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa, held at Barkly West, from the 31 May to the 3 June 1990, adopt the following declaration :

Being aware of our history and context, and based upon our understanding and the authority of the Word of God, we have sought empowerment, education and a vision for our future. This vision includes the recognition of the dignity and equal participation of all persons, without regard to race, sex, or personal status within the Baptist and wider community.

Consistent then with this vision we make known the following:

MINISTRY AND MISSION

We understand that Mission and Ministry is the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. That it is both indivisible from, and related to the total South African context in which we live and worship.

We recognise the privilege of individuals to discover the truth of their experience and history, the good news of the Gospel and to participate fully within the community of believers and the wider society.

The status of women in the church is of concern. We realise that the church has uncritically taken over oppressive traditions. We therefore call for the empowerment of women, and encourage them to exercise and develop the gifts God has given to them.

The participation by the youth in the life of the church is too limited and they are being denied the opportunities to exercise their gifts. We call for the full involvement of youth, who are church members, in all levels of our denomination.

We acknowledge the privilege and right of children to develop their abilities to the full within, and without the community of the believers. To be reared in homes that are conducive to and which cultivate their skills, their sense of family and community. We support their right to exercise their culture and to discover their history and faith.

CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS

We recognise the Church Universal and rejoice in our common Mission, which is the bringing of the message of Jesus Christ to the world.

As Baptists, in our current divided context, we note the continuous need for repentance, restitution and reconciliation in the spirit of humility and dignity.

We affirm the need to establish a united Baptist witness in South Africa, but recognise the present priority of the Baptist Convention to continue to consolidate and build up its own identity.

We encourage the present and developing local and international participation of persons and communities in Mission with us. These relationships must be realised without domination and are to remain consistent with mutually agreed interests.

SOCIO-POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING

We understand ourselves to be created by God in whose sight all persons have equal status, dignity, and full human rights. Further, we understand ourselves called to be a community of people participating fully in the struggle for justice, peace and the common good.

Where injustice, conflict, domination, and exploitation exist, we as individuals, as a community of believers and citizens of South Africa, are compelled to expose, resist and reject those practices.

We will continue to expose, resist and reject the practice and ideology of Apartheid, or any other oppressive system that denies the inviolable human rights of persons as it may be applied to, or affects us as individuals, as a community of believers or within society as a whole.

At this point we therefore draw attention to the following:

* In relation to the exiles and political prisoners we call upon the Convention, together with other churches of the SACC, to prepare and organise themselves to receive and support those returnees and their families.

* In relation to conscientious objectors, we call upon the Convention to work for provision of non-punitive, non-combatant, and equal alternative service for those refusing military service.

* In relation to the education crisis, we call upon the Convention to address the backlog that exists in education, and to work towards the institution of a single, non-racial system in South Africa.

* In relation to the pursuit of a peaceful settlement to the country-wide political conflict, we urge the Convention to work towards the institution of a just and peaceful society. Should the option of negotiation be exercised, then a conducive atmosphere should be created. This would include such fundamental changes as the unconditional release of political prisoners, the end to structural violence, the cessation of political trials, the settlement of the land issue and the removal of unjust laws from the statute books.

****

ENCLOSURE 6 :

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS.

(Conducted at the 1989 BU Assembly in Kimberley)

SOME EXPLANATORY COMMENTS REGARDING ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE :

1. Of the 400 delegates, 100 declined to take a copy. The reasons I was given included comments such as : "my husband will fill it in", "I don't agree with the questions", "I don't want to fill it in". Most simply practiced a policy of studious avoidance.

2. A serious dissension arose at this Assembly because the organising committee of local church arranged for a SADF Hall to be the venue for the meetings. After much discussion it was voted that the venue be changed. These factors may have had the effect of causing those angered by this decision to refuse to fill in a questionnaire concerned with "political" issues.

3. Of the 300 thus distributed, 71 were returned to me. These replies constitute approximately 18% of the total number of delegates, or 24% of the 300 actually distributed.

4. I was hoping to obtain an overall return of 25%, but the percentage that I do have is, statistically speaking, a sufficient base from which to draw conclusions.

5. Please note that I have not supplied a detailed summary of the results that I have obtained. Figures are rounded off to the nearest decimal point and responses are, at times, grouped together (eg the average attendance at Sunday morning services).

6. In order to obtain the necessary statistical returns, many of the answers had to be coded according to the general type of replies given.

7. Attached to each questionnaire was a covering letter, not included here.

QUESTIONNAIRE :

THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTISTS, THE GOSPEL AND POLITICS.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION.

Theological qualifications of Pastor

75% Diplomas
25% Degrees

The name of the Theological institution/s where these qualifications were obtained :

89% Local Institutions
11% Overseas Institutions

Number of Deacons in your Church :

11%	3 or less male deacons	72%	No female deacons
73%	4-10 male deacons	21%	1 female deacon
16%	11-19 male deacons	7%	2 female deacons

Average number of people who attend Sunday morning services :

11% less than 50
43% 50-100
18% 100-200
29% 200-500

Approximately what percentage of your congregation (including the deacons) have some formal theological training (eg Bible correspondence course, degree, diploma, etc)?

: 66% have 5% or less
: 44% have 5-20%

B. CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

Which of the following definitions of sin is closest to your own understanding. Choose <u>one</u>.

48% Essentially sin is an evil which is committed by persons in rebellion against God. Sins are committed by individuals but these sins may also affect other people in a negative way.

48% Sin is not just an evil that is committed by individuals against God and other persons. Sin is also embodied in the exploitative political and economic structures of our society.

Indicate which of the following definitions is closest to your own view of salvation. Tick ONE option.

To be saved means :

60% To be justified in God's sight, to be reconciled to God and to other people, and to seek to proclaim this reconciliation to the world.

38% To be justified in God's sight, to be reconciled to God and other people, to proclaim this reconciliation and to actively strive to establish God's justice, peace and liberation within the structures of society.

The Kingdom of God should be seen as : (choose ONE of the following)

16% Already present and something which the Christian should actively promote within society.

7% Something which God will bring about in the future when Christ returns in glory.

69% Both a present reality which should be actively promoted within social structures and a future hope.
(several people deleted the words "actively promoted within social structures")

Which of these definitions of the mission of the church is closest to your own view? Choose ONE.

The mission of the church is :

19% To save as many souls as possible and to prepare them for a future in heaven.

49% To proclaim God's salvation to lost, sick and fallen individuals who will, as a natural consequence, improve the world in which we live.

29% To proclaim God's salvation to the lost, poor, sick and oppressed and to actively seek to change the socio-political and economic structures which keep people in bondage.

With regard to the Baptist doctrine of the "Separation between Church and the State", which of the following interpretations of this doctrine are closest to your own view? Choose ONE :

21% The State is to be fully responsible for secular matters whilst the church is to be concerned about spiritual matters.

64% The Church must exercise its prophetic witness in relation to the State and not allow the evil policies and practices of the State go unchallenged. The Church is to be separate from the State precisely because of its prophetic task.

10% The Church is compelled by the teachings of Paul in Romans to obey the State in everything. The Church has no right to criticise or disobey the State, its task is to preach the gospel.

C. BAPTIST CHURCH POLICY AND PRACTICE.

Presently many of our Baptist churches are separated along racial and cultural lines. Which ONE of the following statements about this congregational separation is closest to your own view?

38% They are separate because people live in different areas. If, in the future, the government decides that people of different races can live in the same areas, these churches could be united at the local congregational level.

2% These churches are, and should remain, separate because the cultures, languages and socio-economic situations of the various races are so different that they could never really all be members of one local church.

56% Baptists should seek to have the Group Areas Act abolished so that the legal and practical difficulties of multi-racial churches could be eliminated. Baptists should at all times promote genuine fellowship and co-operation between the different race groups within the denomination.

What contact does your church presently have with other Baptist churches that consist of race groups other than your own? Indicate the statement most closely describes your church.

15% Our church is fully multi-racial in terms of both its members and its leaders.

Our church has occasional contact with other Baptist churches consisting of different race groups, we meet approximately :

37% 1-4 times a year
12% 5-12 times a year
10% more than 12 times a year

23% Our church has little or no contact with other churches of different race groups.

To which ONE of the following possible causes do you attribute the withdrawal of the Baptist Convention from the Baptist Union :

41% The influence of certain black radicals and the unwillingness of the Convention leaders to negotiate with the Union despite the Union officials' best efforts.

19% The Convention's rejection of the paternalism of the Union and the way in which the white Union churches have compromised the Christian faith in not actively resisting the government's Apartheid policies.

30% Other reasons, eg Convention's desire for autonomy, Convention's failure to understand "merger", tragic misunderstanding, international pressure, etc.

D. QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE GOSPEL AND SOCIAL ETHICS.

Assuming that "politics" is defined as having to do with the government, laws and customs of a country, how should the church relate to the political sphere? Choose ONE of the following options:

38% The church should have nothing to do with the political sphere but rather concentrate on more essential spiritual matters such as evangelism, church growth and the Christian family.

56% In addition to its responsibilities to its own members and its evangelistic efforts, the church also has political responsibilities.

If you have said that the church does have political responsibilities, which of the following approaches do you think are valid?

(These percentages apply only to the 56% that indicated that the church did have political responsibility.)

73% The church should consistently speak out against discrimination and injustice and seek to make its objections clear to those in authority.

23% The church should verbally and actively resist oppression wherever it is to be found, even if this means participating in acts of civil disobedience such as protest marches and boycotts.

2% The church can go so far as employing violent means if it considers the evils against which it is fighting to be so great as to warrant violent resistance.

Which of the following would you regard as the most important and immediate issues facing the church in South Africa?

The 4 highest ratings were :

39% Apartheid
61% Lack of Prayer
____ The New Age Movement
____ Urbanization
____ The Charismatic Movement
54% The break-down of the family
51% Evangelism
____ Racism and other forms of injustice
____ The communist threat
____ Immorality

If you are a pastor, or preach on occasion, on which subjects do you most regularly preach ?

32% Expository preaching
12% Social responsibility
20% Christian growth
15% Jesus' death & resurrection, justification, evangelism

With regard to military service and military chaplains, please tick the options with which you agree.

48% wholeheartedly support military service and agree with the way in which the military chaplaincy presently operates.

37% have reservations about military chaplaincy and Christians doing military service within the South African Defence force.

15% regard criticisms of the Defence force and conscription as part of a Communist plot to weaken South Africa.

1% disagree entirely with military service and chaplaincy.

58% believe that Christians should be given the option of alternative service.

24% agree that Baptists can serve as chaplains, but they must not wear uniforms and must also be willing to minister to those whom the Defence force regards as the "enemy".

E. THE SA BAPTIST CHURCHES AND MODERN CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY.

Please indicate which of the following views on the relationship between Christianity and culture you regard as being correct : Choose ONE option.

32%	Christianity is above culture, it has nothing to do with culture and approaches all people equally.
4%	Christianity is against culture in that one must put aside all ones cultural differences and be committed to Christ alone.
59%	Christianity cannot be separated from culture, Christians must be made aware of this before their faith can be meaningfully preached or practiced.

Do you think that the Baptist Union should again apply for observer status within the SACC (South African Council of Churches)?

30%	Yes
63%	No

Have you heard of the FCB (Fellowship of Concerned Baptists)?

79%	Yes
17%	No

Do you agree with their aims ?

31%	Yes
31%	No
38%	No reply

Have you heard of the ICT (Institute of Contextual Theology)?

45%	Yes
51%	No

Do you agree with their aims ?

11%	Yes
23%	No
66%	No reply

What do you perceive the aims of the FCB to be?

47%	No reply.
4%	Don't know.
17%	To create socio-political awareness amongst Baptists.
20%	To remove unjust laws and build bridges of reconciliation.
7%	I don't agree with them, they are doing things in the wrong way.

If asked, would you sign :

The Kairos Document	9%	Yes	80%	No
The Evangelical Witness	25%	Yes	34%	No

Have you personally read the Kairos Document?

69%	Yes	17%	No	11% Parts of it

Have you personally read the Evangelical Witness?

41%	Yes	48%	No	3% Parts of it

At present, there is a great deal of debate concerning the role of women within the church. Indicate which of the following viewpoints most closely resembles your own. Choose ONE.

7%	The present structures such as the BWA (Baptist Women's Association) fully meet the needs of Christian women.
59%	The present structures are not adequate. Women are also called by God to be active in Sunday Schools, women's groups and in important ministries such as catering, hospitality, counselling and visiting the sick. But women are not called to exercise authority over men or over the church as a whole.
29%	All of the above are valuable, but women are also called by God to preach, exercise authority over the church as a whole and to be ordained as pastors in accordance with their spiritual gifts and ministries.

Do you have any further comments that you would like to make?

48%	No reply.
17%	Affirmative comments.
17%	Options offered in the questionnaire were too extreme.
3%	Critical of the questionnaire.
3%	Against women's ordination.
9%	In favour of women's ordination.

Once again, thank you very much for your assistance.

L. Kretzschmar

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

A. SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTIST SOURCES.

1. Baptist Magazines, Newspapers, and Handbooks.

Baptists Today

Concern (A Baptist Newsletter on South Africa)

Convention Times

FCB Newsletter

NIBA News (Natal Indian Baptist Association)

SA Baptist

South African Baptist Handbooks (SABH)

2. Baptist Reports and Publications.

(Listed alphabetically by title)

A Command of Jesus Christ: Baptism
(Roodepoort : Mission Press, nd)

A Growing Concern (South African Baptist Press, 1964)

A Shared Purpose (SABMS, 1963)

Acts and Possibilities (The annual report of the BUSA and the SABMS, Grahamstown, 1923)

Baptist Union Assembly 1988 : Documented Agenda

Baptist Union Assembly 1991 : Documented Agenda

Baptist Union of South Africa and South African Baptist Missionary Society : Constitution and By-Laws (1938)

Baptist Heritage Series (London : The Baptist Union, nd)

Baptist Bible Institute (Prospectus, nd)

Baptist Blue-Print 1965 : Spiritual Power for Today's Opportunity
(Johannesburg : SA Baptist Press, c1965)

Baptist International Theological Seminary Constitution (nd)

BMD document regarding policy (T D Pass, 1988)

Baptist World Alliance resolution on racism in general and apartheid in particular (Amer Bapt Q 5:1, March 1986, 69-70)
Christian Discipleship : Bible Study Course (ed) John N Jonsson (BU Committee for Home Missions and Evangelism, 1961)

Church Membership (Roodepoort : Baptist Publishing House, nd)

Co-Operation - The Keyword (South African Baptist Press, 1961)

Denominational Work Review Proposals and Draft Recommendations (BU and SABMS, March 1978)

Duties of the Missionary (SABMS, nd)

Memorandum to the State President from the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (1985)

Reports and Recommendations of Deputations to SABMS Fields in the Union of South Africa (1944)

South African Baptist Missionary Society : Annotated Policy Report (W Edmunds, 1957)

South African Baptist Missionary Society (Report on the Transkeian Field, W Edmunds, nd)

The Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa, Parktown (Prospectus 1978)

The Constitution and By-Laws of The South African Baptist Missionary Society (1938)

The Bantu Baptist Church : Report of inauguration at Tshabo, King William's Town (Cape Town : Townsend, 1927)

The Barkly West Declaration (Barkly West, June 1990)

The Sound of Many Voices (SABMS, 1965)

The Straight Furrow (SABMS, 1962)

3. Commemorative Documents.

(Listed alphabetically by Place, thereafter by Author)

Berlin Heerden	A Concise Historical Survey of Zion Baptist Church, Berlin (1888-1988) (eds) E A Winkelmann and P W van
Durban	Jubilee : 1900-1950 (Bulwer Road Baptist Church, Durban)
East London	Seventy-five Years : German Baptist Church, East London (1864-1939)
East London	The Women's Association of the First Baptist Church, East London Diamond Jubilee Celebrations (1954)
East London	First Baptist Church Centenary : 1864-1964
East London	City Baptist Church Centenary : 1883-1983 (ed) B S Sprenger
Eastern Province	Where it all began (Eastern Province Association, 1960)
Frankfort	Frankfort Baptist Church Centenary : The Sentinel of the Century 1861-1961
Grahamstown	One and a Half Centuries of Grahamstown Baptist Witness (1820-1970)
Johannesburg	Jubilee Celebrations : 1888-1948 (Central Baptist Church, Johannesburg)
Kariega	Kariega Baptist Church Centenary : 1834-54-1954, A Legacy of the 1820 Settlers
Kimberley	Kimberley Baptist Church : A Church is Born, the first 100 years (1889-1989 (ed) C Botha
King William's Town	Seventy-five Years of Progress (Jubilee of the Taylor Street Baptist Church, King William's Town)
Kwelegha	Moira Baptist Church Centenary Anniversary (1888-1988)
Margate	Margate Baptist Church : Silver Jubilee 1957-1982

Pietermaritzburg — Sixty Eight Years of Progress : The Baptist Church of Pietermaritzburg (1952)

Pretoria — Jubilee Celebrations of the Central Baptist Church, Pretoria (1947)

Roodepoort — Roodepoort Baptist Church Golden Jubilee (1905-1955)

Rouxville — Rouxville Baptist Church (1947-1972)

Troyeville — Sixty Years in the Harvest Field (Baptist Church of Troyeville Diamond Jubilee, Johannesburg, 1897-1957)

JACOB, V D & CORNELIUS, J P — Indian Baptist Mission 1903-1953 Golden Jubilee

MOLL, T A — The first Forty years : A short history of the Umtata Baptist Church (1946-1986) (1986)

MOSES, K D (ed) — Indian Baptist Mission Diamond Jubilee : 1903-1978

TIMOTHY, N (ed) — The Diamond Jubilee of Indian Baptist work in South Africa : 1903-1978

4. Publications of the South African Baptist Historical Society.

(Listed alphabetically by author, thereafter by title)

CUTHBERTSON, Gregor C
H J Batts
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1977)

DAVIES, W
A Memoir
(Printed in Grahamstown, 1938; reprinted by the SA Baptist Historical Society, 1977)

DOKE, C M
Trekking in South Central Africa 1913-1919
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1975)

HAUS, F H
Carsten Langhein
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

In Journeys Oft : The Rev Carl Hugo Gutsche's Missionary Journeys in South Africa, Beyond "British Kaffraria" and the "Border"
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1989)

HENDRIKS, J A
Hugo Gutsche : A Biographical Sketch
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

HUDSON-REED, Sydney
A Kingly Contribution : T B King
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1983)

1820 Tower Trouble under Baptist Auspices
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1968)

John Hiebner : Pioneer Pastor Beloved
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

JONSSON, John N
Verbum Crucis Spiritu : An account of the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1980)

Nachfolge Christi : The Followers of Christ
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1980)

PARNELL, Chris W
G W Cross : The Man who gave his Life
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

PHILPOTT, R H
James A Hendricks : A Biographical Sketch
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1978)

Ernest Baker : A Greatheart and Valiant for the Truth
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1970)

Man with a Mission : T Aiken
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

POORTER, John — Charles Haddon Spurgeon : C H Spurgeon's interest in Natal Baptists
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

RODE, Manfred — A Personal account of the History of the Afrikaans Baptist Church at Parow
(SA Baptist Historical Society, 1976)

(Listed by Title)

A J A Rowland : A Biographical Sketch
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

Autobiography : E P Pienaar
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

Charles Garratt : 1878-1965
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

Our 1820 Founder : A Memoir
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

Paul Rode
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

Shadrack Mashologu : A Biographical Sketch
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

Workers Together : Mrs T Perry and Mrs T Riemer
(SA Baptist Historical Society, nd)

5. Unpublished Material.

(Listed alphabetically by author, thereafter by title)

CODRINGTON, Reg B "Ordination and Accreditation in Baptist Polity" (1989) 7pp

DOKE, W H "Presidential Address" (15 September 1932) 10pp

GARRETT, Charles "The Present Day Challenge of the Bible" (15 September 1932) 7pp

GORVEN, R A "Baptists and Politics" (A letter addressed to the Ministers, Deacons and Church Members, The Baptist Churches of South Africa, 28 May 1986) 2pp

GURNEY, Brian J "An examination of the Executive Committee of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa's response to the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa's Barkly West National Workshop" (August 1991) 5pp

---- "An Appraisal of the paper 'Women and Eldership' by the Rev Alf Niewoudt" (June 1988) 19pp

HALSE, Henry James "Autobiographical Manuscript of Henry James Halse (1817-1880)" (Cory Library, Grahamstown)

HARRIS, Brian "A Biblical Theology of Women" (March 1989) 8pp

HAUS, F H "The German Baptist Churches in South Africa" (1975) 49pp

HAY, William "A Sermon preached on Centenary Sunday April 11, 1920 in the Baptist Chapel, Grahamstown" (Cory Library, Grahamstown)

HOFFMEISTER, Des "My reflections of the 1989 Baptist Union Assembly held at Kimberley" (November 1989) 6pp

HOLDT, M "The Authority of Scripture and the Role of Women in the Church" (c1989) 7pp

HOLNESS, Peter "Reacting to Kairos" (nd) 4pp

---- "Kairos: God's Kingdom or Man's?" (nd) 3pp

----	"Weighed in the Balances and found wanting" (nd) 4pp
HOUSTON, T	"African Reformation, Paper No. 2" (nd) 9pp
HOWARD, William	"A manuscript notebook : verse and prose on subjects of Christianity, Baptists, Abstinence, Education, Biography" (Cory Library, Grahamstown, nd)
HUDSON-REED, Sydney (ed)	"Baptists in Southern Africa" (Unpublished six-volume series, 1975)
JAMES, A H Jeffree	"Occasional Papers" (nd) 44pp
----	"Baptists and Social Action" (nd) 4pp
----	"The South African situation : A Baptist viewpoint" (1985) 6pp
----	"A Century of Witness against racial discrimination and social justice : Resolutions of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa 1895-1987" (c1987) 38pp
JESSOP, D E	"Chapel House : Grahamstown" (nd) 6pp
NIEWOUDT, Alf	"Women and Eldership" (nd) 13pp
PARNELL, Chris W	"A letter to those who attended the May 31 to June 3, 1990 'Awareness' meetings at Barkley (sic) West and to anyone else who is interested" (June 1990) 17pp
PASS, Theodore	"Light and Shade - The Indian Initiative in the Indian Baptist Association and Indian Baptist Mission" IN (ed) S Hudson-Reed Baptists in Southern Africa, Vol 3 (1975) 122pp
PHIPSON, A	"A Resumé of the History of Baptist work in the Transkei" (nd) 2pp
STEINEGGER, P	"A Historical Investigation into the Relationship between the South African Baptist Union and Military Conscription into the South African Defence Force" (1990) 15pp
WALKER, David	"The Vision of an 'Alternative' Baptist Community" (Paper delivered at an FCB meeting, March 1990) 14pp
(Listed by Title)	"Barlona (The Lady) : Olive Carey Doke" (nd) 2pp
	"Memoirs of August Reinke" (Kaffrarian Missionary Museum, King Williamstown) 9pp

"Memoirs of Juanita Henrietta" (granddaughter of Karl and Henrietta Pape), (Kaffrarian Missionary Museum Kingwilliamstown) 19pp

External Studies : Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa, Parktown (Lectures for the use of external students) on the following subjects :

"Baptist Principles"
"Evangelism"
"Systematic Theology"
"Ecclesiology"
"Theology of Missions"
"Christian Ethics"
"Pastoral Theology"

B. REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS.

(Listed alphabetically by title)

Apartheid and the Church (SPROCAS Report, 1972)

Cottesloe Consultation
(Report of the Consultation among South African member churches of the WCC, 7-14 December 1960, Johannesburg)

Ethos - Study on Development of Evangelicals since EWISA : Baptists (1991)

Evangelical Witness in South Africa (EWISA) 1986

Findings Report of a team of International Evangelical Visitors to South Africa (April 15-28, 1989)

Memorials of the British Settlers of South Africa
(Grahamstown, 1844)

Mennonite Confession of Faith
(Adopted by the Mennonite General Conference, August 1963)
(Scottdale : Herald Press, 1963)

One hundred years of the American Board of Mission in South Africa : 1835-1935 (J Dexter Taylor)

Relevant Pentecostal Witness (1987)

Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the South African Council of Churches (Chairman : C F Eloff), (Pretoria : Government Printer RP74/1983)

Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Mass Media
(Chairman : M T Steyn), (Pretoria: Government Printer, RP89/1981)

Report of the Commission on the Ordination of Women
(Church of the Province of Southern Africa, 1989)

Report on the Women's Struggle in South Africa
(Feminist Theology Conference, ICT, 31 August-2 September 1984)

The Kairos Document : Challenge to the Church : A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa (1985)

The Kwasizabantu Affirmation (1991)

The Triumphs of His Grace
1951-1952 (The Story of the 160th year of the BMS)

The Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)

The Misuse of Religion in South Africa (ICT, 1988)

C. BOOKS, ARTICLES AND THESES.

ACKERMANN, Denise & ARMOUR, Mary
"Differing Theories, Same old Praxis : Some Feminist thoughts on Rightwing Religion"
JTSA 69 (Dec 1989) 53-59

ACKERMANN, Denise, et al (eds)
Women Hold up Half the Sky
(Pietermaritzburg : Cluster, 1991)

AITKEN, R D
Who is my Neighbour? The story of a mission hospital in South Africa
(Lovedale Press : 1944)

AKERS, Thomas Stuart
"South African Baptists involved in Missions to the other than White groups in Southern Africa"
(Baptist Theological College, Johannesburg : L Th, 1978)

ANDRé, Ellis F
"The Baptist understanding of the relationship between Church and State, with particular reference to the South African Situation"
(University of Cape Town : MA, 1984)

APPIAH-KUBI, Kofi & TORRES, Sergio (eds)
African Theology en Route
(Maryknoll : Orbis, 1979)

ASIWAJU, A I & CROWDER, M (eds)
Tarikh 6:1 Historical Method 21 (London : Longman & the Historical Society of Nigeria, 1978)

BAINTON, Ronald H
Here I stand : A life of Martin Luther
(New York : Mentor, 1950)

The Age of the Reformation
(New York : van Nostrand, 1956)

BAKER, Derek (ed)
Reform and Reformation : England and the Continent c1500-c1750
(Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1979)

BALIA, Daryl M.
"Discerning God's will for mission in South Africa today" Miss 17:1 (April 1989) 22-30

BARCLAY, William
Ethics in a Permissive Society
(London : Fontana, 1971)

BATTS, H J
History of the Baptist Church in South Africa (Cape Town : Maskew Miller, c 1920)

BAUM, Gregory
Religion and Alienation
(New York : Paulist Press, 1975)

---- The social imperative
(New York : Paulist Press, 1979)

BAX, Douglas S A Different Gospel : A Critique of the Theology behind Apartheid
(Johannesburg : Presbytarian Church of SA, nd)

BEARDSLEE, J W "Secularization" Reformed Review 22 (March 1969) 49-54

BEASLEY-MURRAY, G R Men and Woman in the Church
(London : The Baptist Union of Great Britain & Ireland, 1983)

BEBBINGTON, David W "Baptists and Politics since 1914" IN (ed) K W Clements, Baptists in the Twentieth Century
(London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983) 76-95

BECK, Rosalie, et al "The Impact of Southern Baptist Women on Social Issues : Three Viewpoints" Bapt H & H 22:3 (July 1987) 29-40

BEIDELMAN, T O "Social Theory and the Study of Christian Missions in Africa" Africa 44 (1974) 235-249

BENDER, Harold S The Anabaptist Vision IN (ed) G Hershberger The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1957) 29-54

BERGER, P The Social Reality of Religion
(Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1967)

BERTELSMANN-KADALIE, Rhoda "The Importance of Feminism for the Women's Movement in SA" JTSA 66 (1989) 4-20

BETTERSON, Henry Documents of the Christian Church
(London : OUP, 1963)

BLAMIRES, Harry The Secularist Heresy : The Erosion of the Gospel in the Twentieth Century
(London : SPCK, 1981)

BLEVINS, Carolyn De Armond "Women in Baptist History" Rev & Exp 83:1 (Winter 1986) 51-61

BOCOCK, Robert and THOMPSON, Kenneth (eds) Religion and Ideology
(Manchester : University Press, 1985)

BOREHAM, F W The man who saved Ghandi : A short History of John Joseph Doke
(London : Epworth Press, 1948)

BORNKAMM, H — Luther's World of Thought (St Louis : Concordia, 1965)

BOSCH, David J — Witness to the World (London : Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980)

---- — "In Search of Mission : Reflections on 'Melbourne' and 'Pattaya' Miss 9:1 (1981) 3-18

---- — "In search of a new Evangelical understanding" IN (ed) Bruce J Nicholls, In Word & Deed : Evangelism and Society Responsibility (Exeter : Paternoster & Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation, 1985) 63-84

---- — "Mission in Jesus' Way : A Perspective from Luke's Gospel" Miss 17:1 (April 1989) 3-21

---- — Transforming Mission : Paradigm shifts in Theology of mission (Maryknoll : Orbis, 1991)

BOTTOMORE, T B — Sociology : A Guide to Problems and Literature (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1962)

BOW, J G — What Baptists believe and why they believe it (Nashville : Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, nd.)

BRACHLOW, Stephen — "John Smyth and the Ghost of Anabaptism : A rejoiner" Bapt Q 30:7 (July 1984) 296-300

---- — "Puritan Theology and General Baptist Origins" Bapt Q 31:1 (1985) 179-194

BREWS, Alan — "Vulnerable to the right : The English-speaking Churches" JTSA 69 (Dec 1989) 41-52

BRIGGS, J H Y — "From Christendom to Pluralism" IN (ed) D F Wright Essays in Evangelical Ethics (Exeter : Paternoster Press, c1978) 59-81

---- — "Charles Haddon Spurgeon and the Baptist denomination in 19th C Britain" Bapt Q 31:5 (Jan 1986) 218-240

---- — "She-preachers, widows and other women : the Feminine dimension in Baptist life since 1600" Bapt Q 31:7 (1986) 337-352

BRONNERT, David — "Social Ethics" IN (eds) B N Kaye and G J Wenham Law, Morality and the Bible (Leicester : IVP, 1978) 216-229

BROWN, E — "A discussion of the theological method of church history with reference to the church historiography of South Africa" (University College of Zululand, inaugural lecture, 1969)

BROWN, Kenneth D — "The Baptist Ministry of Victorian England and Wales" Bapt Q 32:3 (July 1987) 105-120

---- — A Social History of the Nonconformist ministry in England and Wales 1800 - 1930 (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1988)

BROWN, Louise Fargo — The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy men in England during the Interregnum (New York : Burt Franklin, 1911)

BROWN, Raymond — "Baptist Preaching in early 18th Century England" Bapt Q 31:1 (1985) 4-22

---- — The English Baptists of the eighteenth century (London : Baptist Historical Society, 1986)

BUIS, Robert — Religious Beliefs and White Prejudice (Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1975)

BUNDY, Colin — The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry 2nd ed. (Cape Town : David Philip, 1988)

---- — "An Image of its own Past? Towards a Comparison of American and South African History" Radical History Review 46:7 (1990) 117-143

BURRAGE, C — The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550-1641) 2 vols (New York : Russell & Russell, 1912)

CALVIN, John — The Institutes of the Christian Religion (1559 edition : translated Ford Lewis Battles, edited John T McNeill) (Philadelphia : Westminister, /1960)

CAPPS, W H — "The meaning of secular, secularism and secularisation" Lutheran World 16:3 (1969) 263-270

CAREY, S Pearce — William Carey (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1923)

CHADWICK, Owen — The Reformation (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1964)

---- — The Victorian Church (London : Adam & Charles Black, 1966)

---- — The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge : CUP, 1975)

CHAMPION, L G — "Evangelical Calvinism and the Structures of Baptist Church Life : 1775-1825" Bapt Q 28 (1980) 196-208

CHRISTIE, Pam — The Right to Learn (Johannesburg : Ravan & Sached, 1985)

CLARK, Henry W — History of English Non-Conformity, Vol 1 (New York : Russell and Russell, 1965)

CLEMENTS, Keith W — God's Angry Love : The Theological Case for Sanctions against South Africa (Bristol : Christian Concern for Southern Africa, 1990)

CLEMENTS, Keith W (ed) — Baptists in the Twentieth century (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983)

CLIFFORD, John (ed) — The English Baptists : who they are and what they have done (London : Marlborough, 1881)

CLIPSMAN, Ernest F — "An Englishman looks at Rauschenbusch" Bapt Q 29:3 (July 1981) 113-121

COCHRANE, James — Servants of Power : The role of English- speaking churches 1903-1930 (Johannesburg : Ravan, 1987)

COCHRANE, James et al (eds) — Word and Deed : Towards a Practical Theology for Social Transformation (Pietermaritzburg : Cluster Publications, 1991)

COGGINS, James R — "The Theological Positions of John Smyth" Bapt Q 30:6 (April 1984) 247-264

---- — "A Short Confession of Hans de Ries : Union and Separation in Early Seventeenth-Century Holland" MQR 60:2 (1986) 128-138

COMAROFF, John L — "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience : Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa" American Ethnologist 16:4 (1989) 661-685

COMAROFF, Jean & John L — "Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa" American Ethnologist 13 (1986) 1-22

---- — "The Colonization of Consciousness in South Africa" Economy and Society 18:3 (1989) 267-296

---- — Of Revelation and Revolution : Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa (Chicago : University Press, 1991)

CONE, James — "What is the Church?" IN (eds) B. Thlagale & I Mosala Hammering Swords into Ploughshares (Johannesburg : Skotaville, 1986) 141-157

COOK, C W — "The writing of South African Church History: Our appraisal of the English speaking traditions" S A Historical Journal 2 (1970) 107-116

COOK, D — The Moral Maze
(London : SPCK, 1983)

COOK, Henry — What Baptists Stand For
(London : Carey Kingsgate, 1961)

COX, Harvey — The Secular City
(New York : Macmillan, 1965)

CRAGG, Gerald R — The Church and the Age of Reason : 1648-1789
(Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1960)

CRAMP, J M — Baptist History from the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Present Time
(London : Elliot Stock, 1868)

CREASEY, Maurice A — The Quaker as Radical Christian
(London : Friends Home Service Committee, 1974)

CROSS, G W — The Baptist Union of South Africa : A history and some reflections
(Grahamstown : Grocott & Sherry, 1898)

CROSS, K E — Ours is the Frontier
(Pretoria : Unisa, 1986)

CURSONS, William E — Joseph Doke : The Missionary Hearted
(Johannesburg : The Christian Literature Depot, 1929)

CURTEIS, G H — Dissent in its relation to the Church of England
(London : Macmillan, 1873)

CUTHBERTSON, Gregor C — "The non-conformist conscience and the South African War: 1899 - 1902"
(Unisa : PhD, 1986)

---- — "Missionary Imperialism and Colonial Warfare: London Missionary Society Attitudes to the South African War, 1899 - 1902"
SA Historical Journal 19 (1987) 93-114

---- — "The English-speaking Churches and Colonialism" IN (ed) C Villa-Vicencio, Theology & Violence: the South African Debate (1987) 15-30

---- — "Van der Kemp and Philip: the Missionary debate revisited" Miss 17:2 (August 1989) 77-94

---- — "'Cave of Adullam': Missionary reaction to Ethiopianism at Lovedale, 1898 - 1902"
Miss 19:1 (1991) 57-64

DARIES, John M — "Baptists and Human Liberation : South Africa" Amer Bapt Q 9:4 (Dec 1990) 307-309

DAVENPORT, T R H — South Africa - A Modern History (London : Macmillan, 1977)

DAVIES, Emlyn — "Our Historic Baptist Distinctives" The Chronicle (Oct 1953) 191-200

de KIEWIET, C W — A History of South Africa : Social & Economic (Oxford : University Press, 1957)

de JONGE, C — "Francicus Junius (1545-1602) and the English Separatists at Amsterdam" IN (ed) Derek Baker, Reform and Reformation : England and the Continent, c 1500-1750 (Oxford : Blackwell, 1979) 165-173

de GRUCHY, Aubin — "Beyond Intention : John Wesley's Intentional and Unintentional Socio-economic Influences on 18th Century England" JTSA 68 (Sept 1989) 75-85

de GRUCHY, John W — "The Great Evangelical Reversal : South African Reflections" JTSA 24 (Sept 1978) 45-57

---- — The Church Struggle in South Africa (Cape Town : David Philip, 1979)

---- — "Barmen : Symbol of Contemporary Liberation?" JTSA 47 (June 1984) 59-71

---- — Cry Justice (London : Collins, 1986)

---- — "Prayer, Politics and False Piety" IN (eds) A Boesak & C Villa-Vicencio, A Call for an End to Unjust Rule (Edinburgh : St. Andrew Press 1986) 97-185

---- — Theology & Ministry in Context : A South African Perspective (London : Collins, 1986)

---- — "Radical Peace-making : The Challenge of some Anabaptists" in (ed) C Villa-Vicencio Theology & Violence (Johannesburg : Skotaville, 1987) 173-185

de GRUCHY, John W and VILLA-VICENCIO, Charles (eds) — Apartheid is a Heresy (Cape Town : David Philip, 1983)

de GRUCHY, John W and de VILLIERS, W B (eds) — The Message in Perspective : A Book about 'A Message to the People of South Africa'. (Johannesburg : SACC, c 1968)

DENOON, Donald — Southern Africa Since 1800 (London : Longman, 1972)

DEX, Shirley — "The Church's response to Feminism" Bapt Q 31:7 (July 1986) 320-326

DICKENS, A G — "The Teaching of Martin Luther" Bapt Q 30:4 (Oct 1984) 151-161

DOWNS, Frederick S — "Social Influences on Nineteenth Century Baptist Missionaries in India" Amer Bapt Q 8:4 (1989) 247-256

DUCHROW, Ulrich (ed) — Lutheran Churches - Salt or Mirror of Society? (Geneva : Lutheran World Federation, 1977)

DUKE, D N — "Charles Haddon Spurgeon : Social concern Exceeding an Individualistic, Self-Help Ideology" Bapt H & H 22:4 (Oct 1987) 47-56

DURNBAUGH, D F — The Believer's Church (Scottdale : Herald, 1968/1985)

DYCK, Cornelius, J — An Introduction to Mennonite History (Scottdale : Herald Press, 1981)

EBELING, G — Luther : An Introduction to his Thought (London : Collins, 1972)

EDWARDS, David L — Religion and Change (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1969)

EDWARDS, E B — "Baptists in South Africa" The Chronicle (July, 1953) 164-168

EDWARDS, M U — Luther and the False Brethren (Stanford : University Press, 1975)

ELTON, G R — Reformation Europe 1517-1559 (London : Collins, 1963)

ESTEP, William R — The Anabaptist Story (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1975)

---- — The Reformation and Protestantism (El Paso : Carib Publications, 1983)

---- — "The making of a Prophet : An Introduction to Charles Haddon Spurgeon" Bapt H & H 19:4 (Oct 1984) 3-15

---- — Renaissance and Reformation (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1986)

---- — "On the Origins of English Baptists" Bapt H & H 22 (April 1987) 19-26

ETHERINGTON, Norman — "Mission Stations and South African Black Nationalism" The International Journal of African Historical Studies 9:4 (1976) 592-605

---- — "Social Theory and the study of Christian Missions in Africa : A South African Case Study" Africa 47:1 (1977) 31-40

---- — "Missionaries and the intellectual history of Africa" Itinerario 7:2 (1983) 116-143

EVANS, E G — The Romance of the Early Years of the Baptist Church of South Africa (Grahamstown : Grocott & Sherry, 1933)

FERM, Deane William — Third World Liberation Theologies (Maryknoll : Orbis, 1986)

FISHER, Miles Mark — "Separated not Segregated" The Chronicle (April 1951) 87-93

FOREMAN, Harry — "Baptist Provision for Ministerial Education in the 18th Century" Bapt Q 27 (1978) 358-369

FRANK, Douglas W — Less than Conquerors (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1986)

FRIEDMANN, R — "The Doctrine of the Two Worlds" IN (ed) G Hershberger, The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottdale : Herald Press, 1957) 105-118

FRIESEN, Abraham — "The Marxist Interpretation of Anabaptism" Sixteenth Century Journal 1 (1970) 17-34

GARNET, Mary — Take your Glory Lord : William Duma, his life Story (Roodepoort : Baptist Publishing House, 1979)

GENSICHEN, Hans-Werner — "Mission and Ideology in South Africa" Miss 16:2 (Aug 1988) 86-97

GEORGE, Timothy — "Between Pacifism and Coercion : the English Baptist Doctrine of Religious Toleration" MQR 58:1 (1984) 30-49

GERDENER, G B A — The Story of Christian Missions in South Africa (Johannesburg : Linden Christian Church, 1950)

GIFFORD, Paul — The Religious Right in Southern Africa (Harare : University of Zimbabwe, Baobab Books, 1988)

---- — "Theology and Right Wing Christianity" JTSA 69 (Dec 1989) 28-40

GILBERT, A D — Religion and Society in Industrial England (London : Longman, 1976)

GILL, Athol — "Christian Social Responsiblity" in (ed) René C PADILLA, The New Face of Evangelicalism (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1976) 87-102

GILL, Robin — The Social Context of Theology (London : Mowbrays, 1975)

---- — "From Sociology to Theology" IN (ed) D Martin Sociology & Theology : Alliance & Conflict (Brighton : Harvester, 1980)

GLANVILLE, Helena L — "Postmodern thought in the light of Women's Religious Experience" (Paper read at the Theological Society Conference, Pietermaritzburg, 1991)

GLASNER, P E — "The Social Sciences and the work of the Churches II. Secularization : its limitations and usefulness in Sociology" Exp T 83 (October 1971) 18-23

GOTTWALD, Norman K (ed) — The Bible and Liberation (Maryknoll : Orbis Books 1983)

GRASSOW, P — "John Wesley and Revolution" (University of Cape Town : MA, 1989)

GREAVES, Richard L — Enemies under his Feet : Radicals and Non-conformists in Britain, 1664-1677 (Stanford : University Press, 1990)

GREAVES, Richard L (ed) — Triumph Over Silence : Women in Protestant History (London : Greenwood, 1985)

GREELEY, Andrew M — Unsecular Man : The Persistence of Religion (New York : Delta, 1972)

GROVES, C P — The Planting of Christianity in Africa (London : Lutterworth Press, 1948)

HABGOOD, John — Church & Nation in a Secular Age (London : Darton, Longmann & Todd, 1983)

HAILE, H G — Luther : An Experiment in Biography (Princeton : University Press, 1980)

HALLER, William — The Rise of Puritanism (Philadelphia : Univ of Pennsylvania Press, 1938/1972)

HAMMOND-TOOKE, W D (ed) — The Journal of William Shaw (Cape Town : A A Balkema/Rhodes University, 1972)

HANDY, Robert T — "Practical and Prophetic aspects of the Social Gospel : Charles R Henderson & Walter Rauschenbusch" The Chronicle (July 1955) 99-110

HANDY, Robert T (ed) — The Social Gospel in America 1870-1920 (New York : Oxford University Press, 1966)

HARKNESS, R E E — "The Baptist Concept of the Church" The Chronicle (Jan 1952) 3-18

---- — "Baptist Attitudes to Church & State" The Chronicle (July 1956) 129-143

HAURY, David A — "English Anabaptism and Calvin's 'Brieve Instruction'" MQR 57:2 (1983) 145-151

HENDRICKS, James A — Baptists in South Africa (King Williams Town : Bethany Emmanuel, 1959)

HERSHBERGER, G (ed) — The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottdale : Herald Press, 1957)

HERTZLER, James R — "English Baptists interpret Continental Mennonites in the early 19th Century" MQR 54 (January 1980) 42-52

HILL, C W — Baptist Elders (Roodepoort : Baptist Publishing House, 1975)

HILL, Christopher — The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714 (London : Thomas Nelson 1961)

—— — Religion and Politics in 17th Century England (Brighton : Harvester Press, 1986)

---- — "John Bunyan and the English Revolution" Amer Bapt Q 7:4 (1988) 443-459

HILL, M — A Sociology of Religion (London : Heinemann, 1973)

HILLEBRAND, Hans J (ed) — The Reformation - A Narrative History Related by Contemporary Observers and Participants (Grand Rapids : Baker, 1964)

HINCHLIFF, P B — Ecclesiastical History: Its Nature and Purpose (Grahamstown : Rhodes University, 1960)

HOBBS, Herschel H — The Baptist Faith & Message (Nashville : Convention Press, 1971)

HOFFMEISTER, Des — "The Relationships between the Baptist Convention and the Baptist Union" IN (eds) Des Hoffmeister and Brian J Gurney, The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 46-52

HOFFMEISTER, Des & GURNEY Brian J (eds)
The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop: An Empowered Future
(Johannesburg : Awareness Campaign Committee of the Baptist Convention of SA, 1990)

HOFMEYER, J W
"Church History in South Africa : Naught for your Comfort yet" Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae 15:2 (nd) 128-139

HOFMEYER, J W & MILLARD, J A (eds)
History of the Church in South Africa : Guide to information & sources
(Pretoria : UNISA, 1990)

HOPE, Marjorie & YOUNG, James
The South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation
(Maryknoll : Orbis Books, 1981)

HOPKINS, Mark T E
"Spurgeon's Opponents in the Downgrade Controversy" Bapt Q 32:6 (April 1988) 274-295

HUDDLESTON, Trevor
Naught for your Comfort
(London : Collins, 1956)

HUDSON, Winthrop S
"Baptists were not Anabaptists" The Chronicle (Oct 1953) 171-179

"Who were the Baptists?" Bapt Q 16 (July 1954) 303-312

HUDSON-REED, Sydney
By Water and Fire : Baptist Beginnings in South Africa 1820-1877
(Roodepoort : S A Baptist Press, 1970)

"Baptist Beginnings in South Africa : 1820-1877" (M A Thesis, University of Natal, 1972)

"Sixteenth Century Dutch Anabaptism : A Critical Examination of its origins, basic principles and its formative influences" (University of Natal : PhD, 1989)

HUDSON-REED, Sydney (ed)
Together for a Century : The History of the Baptist Union, 1877-1977
(Pietermaritzburg : SA Baptist Historical Society, 1977)

HUDSON-REED, Sydney (ed)
By Taking Heed: The History of the Baptists in Southern Africa 1820-1977
(Roodepoort : Baptist Publishing House, 1983)

HUGHES, Gerard — God of Surprises (London : Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985)

HUGHES, Graham W — "Jubilee of the Baptist Commonwealth and Colonial Society" Bapt Q 14 (1952) 252-256

HUNTER, David — "The Origin of Baptists with special reference to Anabaptists" IN (eds) Des Hoffmeister & Brian J Gurney, The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 14-19

---- — "The Origins of Anabaptism and its import for South African church history" JTSA 75 (June 1991) 61-74

ISERLOCH, E et al, (eds) — Reformation and Counter Reformation (London : Burns and Oates, 1980)

JAMES, A H Jeffree — That Kairos Document (Cape Town : The Protestant Association of South Africa, 1986)

JARMAN, Margaret — "Attitudes to Women in Baptist Churches in the mid-1980's" Bapt Q 31:7 (July 1986) 326-330

JEFFREY, David L — A Burning and Shining Light : English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1987)

JOHNSON, Roger A et al (eds) — Critical Issues in Modern Religion (Engelwood Cliffs : Prentice Hall, 1973)

JOHNSTONE, Frederick — "Most Painful to our Hearts : South Africa through the Eyes of the New School" Canadian Journal of African Studies 16:1 (1982) 5-26

JONSSON, John N — "Baptists in Socio-political Life in South Africa : historical and theological reflections covering the past 30 years" (unpublished paper read in Switzerland at a meeting of the Institute for Baptist and Anabaptist Studies, 5 December, 1984). Later published in Amer Bapt Q 4:3 (1985) 243-256

---- — A Call for Liberation from State Theology (Nilses Publication, 1987)

---- — Not Benevolence but Atonement (Nilses Publication, 1987)

KANE, Harvey J & McCLELLAND, Keith (eds) — E P Thompson : Critical Perspectives (Cambridge : Polity Press, 1990)

KARIS, Thomas & CARTER, Gwendolen M (eds)
From Protest to Challenge, Vol 1
(Stanford : University Press, 1972)

KAYE, B N & WENHAM, G J
Law, Morality and the Bible
(Leicester : IVP, 1978)

KELSEY, Morton T
The Other Side of Silence : A Guide to Christian Meditation
(New York : Paulist Press, 1976)

KING, K R Sellen
"Kariega Baptist Church : A Brief Story from South Africa" The Chronicle (Oct 1950) 184-185

KLASSEN., John
"Women and the Family among Dutch Anabaptist Martyrs" MQR 60:4 (1986) 548-571

KLAASEN, William
Covenant and Community
(Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1968)

KLASSEN, William (ed)
Anabaptism in Outline : Selected Primary Sources
(Scottdale : Herald Press, 1981)

KLIEVER, Lonnie D
"General Baptist Origins : The Question of Anabaptist Influence" MQR 36 (1962) 291-321

KOENIGSBERGER, H G
Luther : A Profile
(New York : Hill and Wang, 1973)

KOLB, Robert
"The Theologians and the Peasants : Conservative Evangelical Reactions to the German Peasants Revolt" Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 69 (1978) 103-130

KRETZSCHMAR, Louise
The Voice of Black Theology in South Africa
(Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1986)

---- "Pietism, politics and mission : An Examination of the views and activities of South African Baptists" Miss 17:2 (August 1989) 103-114

---- "To what extent must African Theology be a Theology of Liberation" IN (ed) L Pato
Towards an Authentic African Christianity (1989) 63-76

---- "A Theology of Dominance : An alternative history of the South African Baptist Union" in (eds) D Hoffmeister and B Gurney, Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 24-32

---- "Hermeneutics, Culture and the Apostle Paul's view of women" Women's Studies 2:1 (1990) 37-51

---- "The Neglected Heritage : An Examination of the Anabaptist roots of the South African Baptist Churches" Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae 16:2 (1990) 135-159

KRETZSCHMAR, Louise (ed) Christian Faith and African Culture (Unitra Religious Studies Forum, Umtata, 1988)

KUHN, Thomas S The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd edition (Chicago : University Press, 1970)

LANGSMEAD CASSERLEY, J V The Retreat from Christianity in the Modern World (London : Longmans, Green & Co, 1952)

Le BARBOUR, A M P "Victorian Baptists : A study of denominational development" (University of Maryland : PhD, 1977)

LEATT, J et al (eds) Contending Ideologies in South Africa (Cape Town : David Philip, 1986)

LEECH, Kenneth True Prayer : an Introduction to Christian Spirituality (London : Sheldon Press, 1980)

LEHMAN, Edward "Reactions to Women in Ministry : A survey of English Baptist church members" Bapt Q 31:7 (1986) 302-320

LEITH, John H Creeds of the Churches (Oxford : Blackwell, 1963)

LINDER, Robert D (ed) God & Caesar (Kansas State University, the Conference on Faith and History : 1971)

LITTELL, F H "The Anabaptist Concept of the Church" IN (ed) G F Hershberger, The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision 119-134

LOADES, David "Anabaptism and English Sectarianism in the mid-Sixteenth Century" IN (ed) Derek Baker, Reform and Reformation : England and the Continent, c 1500-1750 (Oxford : Blackwell, 1979) 59-69

LOHSE, Bernhard Martin Luther : An Introduction to his life and works (Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1986)

---- A short history of Christian Doctrine (Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1966)

LUCKMANN, Thomas The Invisible Religion (New York : Macmillan, 1967)

LUTHER, Martin — To The Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate (1520) IN Works of Martin Luther, Vol 44 (Translated and edited by James Atkinson) (Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1966) 123-217

---- — A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to Guard against Insurrection and Rebellion (1521) IN Works of Martin Luther, Vol 45 (translated J J Schindel, edited Walther I Brandt) (Philadelphia : Muhlenberg Press, 1962) 57-74

---- — Temporal Authority : to what Extent should it be Obeyed? (1523) IN Works of Martin Luther, Vol 45, 81-129

---- — Admonition to Peace : A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia (1525) IN Works of Martin Luther, Vol 46 (translated Charles M Jacobs, edited Robert C Schultz) (Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1967) 17-43

---- — Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants (1525) IN Works of Martin Luther, Vol 46, 49-55

---- — An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants (1525) IN Works of Martin Luther, Vol 46, 63-85

---- — Whether Soldiers, too, can be Saved (1526) IN Works of Martin Luther, Vol 46, 93-137

LYON, David — "Secularization : the fate of Faith in modern Society" Themelios 10:1 (1984) 14-22

MACLENNAN, Ben — A Proper Degree of Terror (Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1986)

MADOLO, Diba W — "The Effects of Apartheid on the Churches and the Convention" IN (eds) Des Hoffmeister & Brian J Gurney, The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 54-59

MADURO, Otto — Religion and Social Conflicts (Maryknoll : Orbis, 1989)

MAFEJE, Archie — "Religion, class & ideology in South Africa" IN (eds) M G Whisson & M E West Religion and Social change in South Africa : Anthropological Essays in Honour of Monica Wilson (Cape Town : David Philip, 1975) 164-184

MAIMELA, S — "The Atonement in the Context of Liberation Theology" JTSA 39 (1982) 45-54

MAJEKE, Nosipho — The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest (Cape Town : Apdusa, 1986; first published in Johannesburg by the Society of Young Africa, 1952)

MAKHANYA, Gideon — "A History of the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa" IN (eds) Des Hoffmeister & Brian J Gurney, The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 33-42

MANLEY, Kenneth Ross — "Origins of the Baptists : The Case for Development from Puritanism-Separatism" Bapt H & H 22:4 (Oct 1987) 34-46

MANSCHRECK, Clyde L — A History of Christianity in the World (Engelwood Cliffs : Prentice-Hall, 1974)

MANUEL, David — "History of the South African Baptist Alliance" IN (eds) Des Hoffmeister and Brian J Gurney, The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 34-43

MARCHANT, James — Dr John Clifford : Life, letters and Remiscences (London : Cassell & Co, 1924)

MARSHALL-GREEN, Molly — "When keeping silent will no longer do : a theological agenda for the contemporary church" Rev & Exp 83:1 (1986) 27-33

MARTIN, David — A General Theory of Secularization (Oxford : Blackwell, 1978)

MARTIN, Sandy D — "Spelman's Emma B De Laney and the African Mission" J of Religious Thought 41 (1984-85) 22-37

MATTHEWS, Ruth — "God, Women and Men : Language and Imagery" Bapt Q 31:7 (July 1986) 331-336

MAYLAM, Paul — A History of the African People of South Africa: From the early Iron Age to the 1970's (Cape Town : David Philip, 1986)

McCARTHY, Carol — "Ordained and Female" Bapt Q 31:7 (July 1986) 334-336

McCORMICK, Richard A — "Theology as a Public Responsibility" America (28 September 1991) 184-189 and 203-206

McLAUGHLIN, R Emmet — "Schwenckfeld and the Strassbourg Radicals" MQR 59:3 (July 1985) 268-278

MELAND, B E — The Secularization of Modern Culture (New York : Oxford University Press, 1966)

MEYER, Carl S — The Church from Pentecost to the Present (Chicago : Moody Press, 1973)

MHLOPHE, Fanyana P — "The effects of Apartheid on Baptist Convention Pastors in South Africa" IN (eds) Des Hoffmeister and Brian J Gurney, The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 53-58

MICKLEM, P A — The Sacred and the Secular (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1948)

MILLER, Alice — For Your Own Good (London : Virago, 1983)

MILLER, Allen O (ed) — Christian Declaration on Human Rights (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1977)

MILLER, Robert Moats — "Social Attitudes of American Baptists, 1919-1929" The Chronicle (April 1956) 73-89.

---- — "The Social Attitudes of American Baptists" The Chronicle (July 1956) 100-114

MITCHELL, Gordon — "A Theology of Militarism in the Chaplains' Service of the South African Defence Force" JTSA 65 (December 1988) 38-46

MKHATSHWA, Smangaliso — "The Role of Contextual Theology in a Changing South Africa" JTSA 72 (Sept 1990) 3-8

MKWAYI, David N — "The Baptist Convention's Strategy for Empowerment" IN (eds) Des Hoffmeister & Brian J Gurney, The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 63-67

MOLTMANN, Jurgen — The crucified God (London : SCM, 1974)

MOORE, David O — "The Withdrawal of Blacks from Southern Baptist Churches following Emancipation" Bapt H & H 16:3 (July 1981) 12-18

MORRIS, Leon — The Abolition of Religion (London : IVP, 1964)

MOSALA, Itumeleng J — "Wesley read from the experience of Social and Political Deprivation in South Africa" JTSA 68 (Sept 1989) 86-91

MOSALA, Itumeleng J & TLHAGALE, Buti (eds) — The Unquestionable Right to be Free. Essays in Black Theology (Johannesburg : Skotaville, 1986)

MOSTELLER, James D — "Baptists & Anabaptists I : The Genius of Anabaptism" The Chronicle (Jan 1957) 3-27

----	"Baptists & Anabaptists II : John Smyth and the Dutch Mennonites" The Chronicle (July 1957) 100-114
MULLINS, E Y	Baptist Beliefs (Valley Forge : Judson Press, 1912/1925)
NATHANIEL, D N	"The origin and development of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa 1900-1978" (University of Durban-Westville : MA, 1979)
NEWBIGIN, Lesslie	Foolishness to the Greeks : The Gospel and Western Culture (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1986)
NEWPORT, John P	"Secularization, Secularism and Christianity" Rev & Exp 68 (1971) 81-93
NICHOLLS, Michael	"Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Educationalist Pt 1 - General Educational Concerns" Bapt Q 31:8 (1986) 384-401
----	"Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Educationalist Pt 2 Principles & Practice of Pastors' College" Bapt Q 32:2 (April 1987) 73-94
----	"The Downgrade Controversy : A Neglected Protagonist" Bapt Q 32:6 (1988) 260-274
NICHOLS, J H	History of Christianity : 1650-1950 (New York : Ronald Press, 1956)
NIEBUHR, H Richard	The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York : New American Library, 1929/1957)
----	Christ and Culture (New York : Harper & Row, 1951)
NIEBUHR, Reinhold	Moral Man and Immoral Society (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932/1960)
NIESEL, W	The Theology of Calvin (Grand Rapids : Baker Book House, 1956)
NISBET, Robert A	The Sociological Tradition (London : Heinemann, 1966)
NOLAN, Albert	God in South Africa (Cape Town : David Philip, 1988)
NORMAN, E R	Church and Society in England 1770-1970 : A Historical Study (Oxford : Clarendon, 1976)
NüRNBERGER, Klaus	"Socio-Economic Development and the Mission of the Church" JSR 1:1 (March 1988) 43-54

NÜRBERGER, Klaus & TOOKE, John (eds)
The Cost of Reconciliation in South Africa
(Cape Town : Methodist Publishing House, 1988)

NUTTALL, Geoffrey F
"Baptists and Independents in Olney to the time of John Newton" Bapt Q 30:1 (January 1983) 26-37

O'CONNOR, Elizabeth
Journey Inward, Journey Outward
(New York : Harper and Row, 1968)

O'DEA, Thomas F
The Sociology of Religion
(Engelwood Cliffs : Prentice Hall, 1966)

OAKES, D, SAUNDERS C, & BUNDY, C (eds)
The Reader's Digest illustrated history of South Africa.
(Cape Town : Reader's Digest, 1988)

ODENDAAL, J D
Die Baptiste
(Pretoria : Afrikaanse Baptistekerk, 1957)

So het God ons skredes gelei : Die ontstaan en groei van die Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk 1867-1977
(Kempton Park : Baptiste Publikasies, 1982)

OMANSON, Roger
"The Role of Women in the New Testament"
Rev & Exp 83:1 (1986) 15-25

OOSTHUIZEN, G C, De GRUCHY, John W et al (eds)
Religion inter group relations and social change in South Africa.
(Pretoria : Human Sciences Research Council, 1985)

OYER, John S
"Luther and the Anabaptists" Bapt Q 30:4 (Oct 1983) 162-172

"The Strasbourg Conference of the Anabaptists 1554-1607" MQR 58:3 (July 1984) 218-229

PADILLA, C René
Mission between the times : Essays on the Kingdom
(Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1985)

PADILLA, C René (ed)
The New Face of Evangelicalism
(London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1976)

PARKER, G Keith
Baptists in Europe : History and Confessions of Faith
(Nashville : Broadman, 1982)

PARNELL, Chris W
Being a Baptist
(Roodepoort : Baptist Publishing House, 1980)

PARNELL, Chris W (ed) — Baptist blue-print 1965 : Spiritual power for today's opportunity (Johannesburg : SA Baptist Press, 1965)

PATO, Luke L — "Religion and Conflict : A Southern African Experience" (Unpublished paper, 1989)

PATO, Luke L (ed) — Towards an Authentic African Christianity (Unitra Religious Studies Forum, Umtata, 1989)

PAUCK W & M (eds) — From Luther to Tillich : The Reformers and their Heirs 7 : Ernst Troeltsch (New York : Harper & Row, 1984)

PAYNE, C H — The story of the Baptists (London : Baptist Union, c 1978)

PAYNE, Ernest A — The fellowship of believers : Baptist thought and practice yesterday and today (London : Kingsgate Press, 1944)

---- — The Baptist Movement in the Reformation and Onwards (London : Kingsgate Press, 1947)

---- — The Baptist Union : A short history (London : The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1959)

---- — The Story of the Baptists (London : Baptist Union Publishers, c1978)

PECK, Scott M — The Road Less Travelled (London : Arrow Books, 1983)

---- — The Different Drum (London : Arrow Books, 1990)

PEIRES, J B — "Nxele, Ntsikana and the origins of the Xhosa religious reaction" Journal of African History 20:1 (1979) 51-61

---- — The House of Phalo (Johannesburg : Ravan press, 1981)

---- — "'Soft' believers and 'hard' unbelievers in the Xhosa cattle-killing" Journalof African History 27 (1986) 443-461

---- — "The central beliefs of the Xhosa Cattle- killing" Journal of African History 28 (1987) 43-63

---- — The Dead will Arise (Johannesburg : Ravan, 1989)

PERKINS, Kenneth O "A Socio-political Orientation Module for Southern Baptist Missionaries in Transkei, Southern Africa" (Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville : D Min, 1990)

PETEGORSKY, D W Left Wing Democracy in the English Civil War (London : Victor Gollancz, 1940)

PHILIP, John Researches in South Africa, Vol 1 (London : James Duncan, nd)

PILLAY, Gerald J "Theology and the fanaticised consciousness" Theologica Evangelica 24:3 (Sept 1991) 2-13

---- "The Problem of Interpretation and Reinterpretation of the History of the Black Church" (due to appear in Studia Ecclesiasticae Historiae in late 1992)

RAMIAH, S "Human Rights Violators in South Africa : A Church Perspective" Amer Bapt Q 9:4 (1990) 303-306

REARDON, B M G Religious Thought in the Reformation (London : Longman, 1981)

RIVETT-CARNAC, Dorothy E Thus Came the English in 1820 (Cape Town : Howard Timmins, 1963)

ROBINSON, H Wheeler Baptist Principles (London : Carey Kingsgate, 1938)

ROBERTSON, Roland Sociology of Religion (Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1969)

---- "Max Weber and German Sociology of Religion" IN (eds) N Smart et al, 19th C Religious thought in the West Vol III (Cambridge : University Press, 1985) 263-304

ROSE, Vernon "The development of Black Baptist Church in the United States of America" IN (eds) Des Hoffmeister and Brian T Gurney, The Barkly West National Awareness Workshop (1990) 20-23

ROSS, Andrew John Philip : Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa (Aberdeen : University Press, 1986)

RUETHER, Rosemary Radford "Prophetic Tradition and Liberation of Women: Promise and Betrayal" JTSA 73 (Dec 1990) 24-33

RUETHER, Rosemary Radford and McLAUGHLIN, G Women of Spirit : Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1979)

RUNYON, Theodore (ed)
Sanctification & Liberation
(Nashville : Abingdon, 1981)

RUPP, G
"Luther and Government" IN (ed) H G Koenigsberger, Luther : A Profile
(New York : Hill and Wang, 1973)

RUSHBROOKE, J H (ed)
The Baptist Movement in the Continent of Europe
(London : Kingsgate Press, 1915)

RUSSELL, Horace O
"Baptists & Liberation" Bapt Q 33:7 (July 1990) 326-330

SAAYMAN, Willem
Christian Mission in South Africa
(Pretoria : UNISA, 1991)

SAITO, Goki
"An investigation into the relationship between the early English General Baptists & the Dutch Anabaptists" MQR 54 (Jan 1980) 67-68

SANGSTER, P
A History of the Free churches
(London : Heinemann, 1983)

SAUNDERS, Christopher
The making of the South African Past
(Cape Town : David Philip, 1988)

SCALISE, Pamela J
"Women in Ministering : Reclaiming our Old Testament heritage" Rev & Exp 83:1 (1986) 7-13

SCHERER, Lester B
"Black Baptists in the United States : Research Needs & Resources" Amer Bapt Q 1:1 (Oct 1982) 69-73

SCHNEIDER, Johannes
Baptism and Church in the New Testament
(London : Carey Kingsgate, 1957)

SCHWäR, J F and PAPE, B E
Germans in Kaffraria : German Settlers Centenary, 1858-1958
(Kingwilliamstown : King Printing Co., c1958)

SELBIE, W B
Non-Conformity : Its Origins and Progress
(London : Williams and Norgate, nd)

SELLERS, Ian
"Edwardians, Anabaptists and the Problem of Baptist Origins" Bapt Q 29 (1981) 97-112

SHAKESPEARE, J H
Baptists and Congregational pioneers.
(London : Kingsgate Press, 1906)

SHENK, Wilbert R
Anabaptism and Mission
(Scottdale : Herald Press, 1984)

SHINER, Larry
"Towards a Theology of Secularization" Journal of Religion (October 1965) 279-295

---- "The Concept of Secularisation in Empirical Research" Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 6 (1967) 207-220

SNYDER, Arnold "The Monastic Origins of Swiss Anabaptist Sectarianism" MQR 57:1 (Jan 1983) 5-26

---- "The Influence of the Schleitheim Articles on the Anabaptist Movement : A Historical Evaluation" MQR 63:4 (Oct 1989) 323-344

SOUTHEY, Nicholas "History, Church and Historical Theology in South Africa" JTSA 68 (Sept 1989) 5-16

SPRUNGER, K L "English Puritans and Anabaptists in early seventeenth century Amsterdam" MQR 46 (April 1972) 113-128

STANLEY, Brian "C H Spurgeon and the Baptist Missionary Society" Bapt Q 29:7 (1982) 319-328

---- "Nineteenth Century Liberation Theology : Non-Conformist Missionaries and Imperialism" Bapt Q 32:1 (1987) 5-18

STAYER, James M Anabaptists and the Sword (Lawrence, Kansas : Coronado Press, 1976)

---- "Anabaptists and future Anabaptists in the Peasants War" MQR 62:2 (April 1988) 99-139

STAYER, James, M and PACKULL, Werner O (eds) The Anabaptists and Thomas Müntzer (Toronto : Kendall/Hunt, 1980)

STONE, Lawrence The Causes of the English Revolution : 1529-1642 (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972)

SWARTLEY, Willard Essays on Biblical Interpretation (Elkhart, Indiana : Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1984)

SWOBODA, Jorg "Bridges which are not too short : Baptists & Lutherans in the German Democratic Republic" Bapt Q 30:4 (Oct 1983) 173-182

TAWNEY, R H Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (Harmondsworth : Pelican Books, 1938)

THOMAS, David "The Christian Council of South Africa as a platform for assimilationist racial ideology" JTSA 67 (June 1989) 24-36

THOMPSON, David "John Clifford's Social Gospel" Bapt Q 31:5 (January 1986) 199-217

THOMPSON, E P The making of the English working class (Hardmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1963)

THOMPSON, Leonard M
A History of South Africa
(New Haven : Yale, 1990)

THOMPSON, Leonard M & WILSON, Monica (eds)
Oxford History of South Africa, 2 Vols
(Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1969, 1971)

TLHAGALE, Buti & MOSALA, Itumeleng J (eds)
Hammering Swords into Ploughshares : Essays in honour of Archbishop Mpilo Desmond Tutu
(Johannesburg : Skotaville, 1986)

TORBET, R G
"The Baptist Concept of the Church" The Chronicle (Jan 1952) 3-18

---- A History of the Baptists, 3rd edition
(Philadelphia : Judson Press, 1963)

TROELTSCH, E
The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 2 Vols (original German edition published in 1911)
(Chicago : University Press, 1981)

TULL, James E
Shapers of Baptist Thought
(Macon, Ga : Mercer University Press, 1984)

TURNER, J Clyde
These things we believe
(Nashville : Convention Press, 1956)

UMBLE, Jenifer Hiett
"Women & Choice : An Examination of the Martyrs' Mirror" MQR 64:2 (April 1990) 135-145

UNDERWOOD, A C
A History of the English Baptists
(London : Kingsgate Press, 1947)

VEDDER, Henry
A Short History of the Baptists
(Valley Forge : Judson Press, 1907)

VILLA-VICENCIO, Charles
"Church & Ideology in Africa" Miss 8:2 (1980) 70-81

---- "Protestantism, Modernity and Justification by Faith" Scottish Journal of Theology 38 (1985) 369-382

---- Between Christ and Caesar : Classic and Contemporary Texts on Church and State
(Cape Town : David Philip, 1986)

---- Trapped in Apartheid
(Cape Town : David Philip, and Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1988)

---- "Towards a Liberating Wesleyan Social Ethic for South Africa today" JTSA 68 (Sept 1989) 92-102

---- "Liberation and Political Theology : Why Politics cannot be left to the Politicians" (Inaugural Lecture, UCT, 4 October 1989, New Series No 143) 18 pp

---- "Right Wing Religion : Have the Chickens come home to roost?" JTSA 69 (Dec 1989) 7-16

---- Civil Disobedience and beyond : Law, resistance and religion in South Africa
(Cape Town : David Philip, 1990)

---- "Religion as Repression and Revolution : A Sociological Comment" Journal for the Study of Religion 4:1 (March 1991) 51-66

VILLA-VICENCIO, C (ed)
Theology & Violence : The South African Debate
(Johannesburg : Skotaville, 1987)

VILLA-VICENCIO, C and De GRUCHY, John W (eds)
Resistance and Hope : South African Essays in Honour of Beyers Naude
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, and Cape Town: David Philip, 1985)

VINK, Jan "A critical study of the relevance of Sociology in the training of Baptist ministers in South Africa"
(UNISA : MA, 1990)

VORSTER, W S (ed) Sexism and Feminism : In Theological Perspective
(Pretoria : UNISA, 1984)

VOSE, Heather M "Attitudes toward War and Peace reflected by some Puritan - Separatist spiritual descendants - the Baptists" MQR 64:4
(Oct 1990) 371-384

WAGNER, William L New Move forward in Europe : Growth Patterns of German-speaking Baptists in Europe
(South Pasadena : William Carey Library, 1978)

WALKER, David "Evangelicals and Apartheid : An inquiry into some predispositions" JTSA 67
(June 1989) 46-61

---- "'Radical Evangelicalism' : An Expression of Evangelical Social Concern relevant to South Africa" JTSA 70 (March 1990) 37-46

---- "Radical Evangelicalism and the Poor : A Challenge to aspects of Evangelical Theology in the South African context" (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg : PhD, 1990)

WALKER, Meagan — "The challenge of Feminism to the Christian concept of God" JTSA 66 (1989) 4-20

WAMBLE, G Hugh — "Baptist contributions to separation of Church and State" Bapt H & H 20:3 (1985) 3-13

WANAMAKER, C A — "A case against Justification by Faith" JTSA 42 (March 1983) 37-50

---- — "Right Wing Christianity and the Bible in South Africa" JTSA 69 (Dec 1989) 17-27

WASSENAAR, Cornelia S J — "Die Trek en Stootfaktore wat 'n Rol Speel by die Aansluiting van Lidmate by die Hatfield Baptiste Kerk" (University of Pretoria : MA thesis, 1981)

WATSON, R L — The Slave Question : Liberty and Property in South Africa (London : Wesleyan University Press & University Press of New England, 1990)

WEBER, Max — The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (London : Unwin Hyman, 1930)

WENGER, J C — "The Schleitheim Confession of Faith" MQR 19:4 (1945) 243-253

WEST, Gerald — Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation (Pietermaritzburg : Cluster Publications, 1991)

WEST, W M S — Baptist Principles, 3rd edition (London : Baptist Union, 1975)

---- — "Foundation Documents of the Faith, 8 : Baptists and Statements of Faith" Exp T 91 (May 1980) 228-233

WHEELER, Edward L — "An Overview of Black Southern Baptist Involvements" Bapt H & H 16:3 (July 1981) 3-11, 40

WHITBY, F F — Baptist Principles (London : Kingsgate Press, nd)

WHITE, B R — The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century (London : The Baptist Historical Society, 1983)

---- — "The English Separatists and John Smyth Revisited" Bapt Q 30:8 (Oct 1984) 344-347

---- — Writing Baptist History (London : The Baptist Union, nd)

WHITE, Jeremy — "Historical Explanation : the heresy of historicism" IN (eds) A I ASIWAJU & M CROWTHER, Tarikh 6:1 (21 Historical Method) 51-65

WHITLEY, W T — The Witness of History to Baptist Principles (London : Alexander & Shepheard, 1897)

---- — A History of British Baptists (London : Kingsgate Press, 1932)

WILLIAMS, D — "The missionaries on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony: 1795-1853" (University of the Witwatersrand : D Phil, 1959)

WILLIAMS, G H — The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia : Westminster, 1962)

---- — "The Radical Reformation Revisited" Union Seminary Quarterly Review 39:1-2 (1984) 1-24

WILSON, Bryan — Religion in Secular Society (London : Watts, 1966)

---- — Contemporary Transformations of Religion (Oxford : OUP and Claredon Press, 1976)

---- — Religion in Sociological Perspective (Oxford and New York : Oxford University Press, 1982)

WILSON, Monica — "Co-operation and Conflict : The Eastern Frontier" IN (eds) Leonard M Thompson & Monica Wilson, The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol 1 (1969) 233-271

WINKLER, Harold E — "The Divided Roots in Lutheranism in South Africa" (University of Cape Town : MA, 1989)

WORSNIP, Michael & VAN DER WATER, Desmond (eds) — We shall overcome (Pietermaritzburg : Cluster Publications, 1991)

WRIGHT, David F (ed) — Essays in Evangelical Social Ethics (Exeter : Paternoster Press, c1978)

YINGER, Milton J — "Present Status of the Sociology of Religion" Journal of Religion 30:3 (July 1951) 194-210

YODER, John Howard — "Balthasar Hubmaier and the beginnings of Swiss Anabaptism" MQR 33 (1959) 5-17

---- "The 'Constantinian' sources of Western Social Ethics" Miss 4:3 (Nov 1976) 98-108

---- "Reformed versus Anabaptist social strategies: an inadequate typology" TSF Bulletin 8:5 (1985) 2-7

YULE, George Puritans in Politics : The Religious Legislation of the long parliament 1640-1647
(Melbourne : Sutton Courtnay, 1981)

****